

# Mennonite Historical Bulletin

Vol. XLVI

January, 1985

ISSN 0025-9357

No. 1

## In Honor of Elizabeth Bender On her Ninetieth Birthday

This issue of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* is dedicated to Elizabeth Bender on the occasion of her ninetieth birthday, February 7, 1985. As a tribute to her, we are publishing "The John F. Funk Era." This is the first of a series of her reflections, going back nine decades, about the Mennonite scene as she experienced it. These accounts have been excerpted from a number of oral interviews, recorded from 1980 to 1983.

Themes that appear and reappear include vision and conflict within the Mennonite Church over the last hundred years, as well as aspects of Elizabeth Bender's own spiritual and intellectual sojourn. The major themes that determine the ordering of the material, forming a larger whole, are: "The John F. Funk Era," "Daniel Kauffman and the Doctrinal Interlude," "Mennonite Leadership: Holding the Church Together," "On the Writing of the 'Anabaptist Vision'," and "On the Mennonite Church During the Past Twenty-Five Years." We plan to include further segments of these, and other, interviews in future issues of the *MHB*.

Many readers know Elizabeth Bender personally. Others know of her, in the light of her life-long interests in Anabaptist and Mennonite research. Some of her interests were "inherited" from her father, John Horsch, the first scholarly historian within the Mennonite Church. She edited virtually all of Harold S. Bender's manuscripts before they went to press. She checked many first drafts of his important communications to others as well. She translated the whole of the then-published portions of *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, hundreds of pages which served as the foundation of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*. She served as a main editor for the *M.E.*, reading every word of every draft, through to the final page

proofs of all four volumes. She began, at 75 years of age, to work part-time for the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, deciphering and translating thousands of pages of old documents from the German, French, Dutch and Latin, that help to chronicle the many generations of our past, going back 450 years.

Elizabeth Bender has continued to do some translation work up to the present time. Her abilities, if anything, have continued to grow, her accuracy well-honed, as she continues to transform facts and ideas from one language into another. Currently, she is close to completing a major project, translating into English the volume, *Guldene Aepffel in*



Elizabeth Bender



*Silbern Schalen*, a volume which affords significant clues into Swiss Brethren piety around 1700, at the time of the Amish division.

May God continue to bless you, Elizabeth, and may you be able to say, all of your days, what you said to the Sojourners Class of College Mennonite Church in 1981:

"As to the future, I leave it confidently in the Lord's hands. To the present time, I am thankful to say, I have had a good measure of health and strength, and am still being trusted to help in certain jobs of proofreading, translating, etc. I do not take that for granted. I appreciate the continued supportiveness of Goshen College and the church.

"Viewed as a whole, I must say in the words of David, 'The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.'"

—Leonard Gross

## Conversations with Elizabeth Bender

### The John F. Funk Era

**Leonard Gross:** Today is June 11, 1982. I'm sitting here with Elizabeth Bender. There are various areas and themes I am hoping we can cover, today, and in future interviews. I'm hoping it can be sort of a personal pilgrimage—a reflective pilgrimage of walking through the decades of the twentieth century, and also reflecting on something of the state of the church after 1880 and into the early 1900s. When were you born?

**Elizabeth Bender:** In 1895, February 7.

**Gross:** Your memory goes back pretty far. Further than most people these days.

**Bender:** Yes, I guess that's true.

**Gross:** Furthermore, you also have memory of your parents, and memory of what they and others have told you about the church, say, since the Civil War era, perhaps. Of course, your parents came over from Ger-

many. Where would you like to begin?

**Bender:** I might as well begin at the beginning of my memories. I don't remember anything of Elkhart except my father marching up and down the room and talking about a *Zettel*—German, for a slip of paper. I didn't know until many years later that that was John F. Funk's notice of dismissal for several members of his staff for "talking too much"—objecting to some business deals, and I haven't any idea what they were. And then, the next thing is moving to Berne, Indiana. So I can't say from personal experience anything about the church conditions because I was too young at Elkhart, say, during the Funk "administration"—not from my personal experience.

The Elkhart congregation must have been a peaceful one, or I would have heard something about disturbances. It was very brotherly in spirit; both my mother and my father, coming without any knowledge of English, got a lot of help from the neighbors. This help was very willingly, and not condescendingly, given. A very friendly spirit. My mother mentions that. My father too, although he worked for Funk. It was kind of a mutual relationship there. He represented the *Herald of Truth* out in the Mennonite communities while he went to school, and Funk in that way made it financially possible for my father to learn some English. He went to what later became Baldwin-Wallace College, at Berea, Ohio. But before that he had gone to the General Conference Indian Mission School in Western Kansas. He stayed there for a few months to learn English. This was while he was still with Funk. And all that time he was writing historical articles. He's the one who put most of those historical articles into the *Herald of Truth*. My father, who at that time thought highly of the sixteenth-century Anabaptist Hans Denck, was under the influence of Ludwig Keller in Germany, who himself was an

Anabaptist scholar. Keller was interested in the Mennonites, but not particularly in some of what he thought were their narrow doctrines, perhaps not even nonresistance, but rather in the voluntary church idea and a conscious belonging to church, contrasting to the popular civil church where church membership was automatic.

Now what more can I say about the church at that time? It was also the day of J.S. Coffman. And my father was deeply impressed by his evangelistic work. Then we went to Berne, Indiana, and I have no recollection of church in Berne at all. There was of course a Mennonite congregation. I don't think it had joined any conference yet at that time. And there were some very nice experiences in Berne. I do remember starting school there. I remember having to stand in the corner for telling my neighbor, a Betzner, how to spell, during a test. I learned a few moral lessons in that. Berne was a friendly place, and the people talked German, and so my mother was much at home there. Of course, at Elkhart they were still talking Pennsylvania Dutch too. Then came the era of J.F. Sprunger. We were at Berne when Sprunger started his faith orphanage. He had no money, no investment to make in property or farms, or anything else. He took everything on faith and established an orphanage on a farm close to Birmingham, Ohio, not far from Cleveland. There my father was the gardener. Religiously and spiritually, my father enjoyed that life. There was no salary connected at all, but a complete living. In winter, he taught the school for a number of years. I attended that school too. (Pause.)

**Gross:** May I ask a question about John Funk and John Horsch: Was Funk willing to publish historical treatises?

**Bender:** Yes, very much so.

**Gross:** Was he in fact the incentive for that?

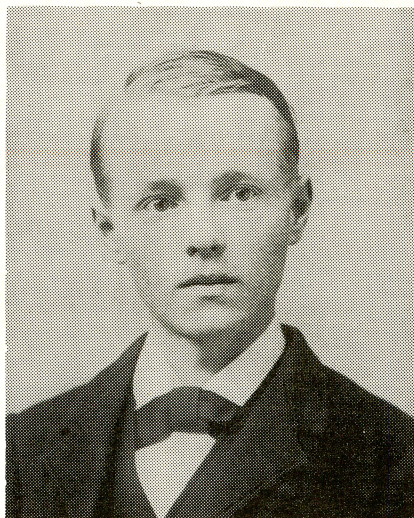
**Bender:** Well, I think it was fifty-

---

The *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* is published quarterly by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church and distributed to the members of the Mennonite Historical Association. **Editor:** Leonard Gross; **Assistant Editor:** Rachel Shenk; **Book Review Editor:** Gerald C. Studer; **Office Editor:** Bryan Kehr; **Production and Design:** Julia Lind; **Associate Editors:** Rafael Falcon, Jan Gleysteen, Merle Good, Amos B. Hoover, Albert N. Keim, James Mininger, Winifred Paul, Lorraine Roth, Shirley Showalter, Wilmer Swope, and J. C. Wenger. Dues for regular membership (\$5), contributing membership (\$10-25), supporting membership (\$50), sustaining membership (\$100-250), and sponsoring membership (\$500 and above) per year may be sent to the editor. (Library rate: \$5 per year.) Articles and news items should be addressed to the editor, 1700 S. Main Street, Goshen, Indiana 46526 (Tel. 219/533-3161, Ext. 477).

Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts*. Microfilms of Volumes I-XLIV of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* are available from: University Microfilms, Inc., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.





John Horsch (1867-1941), Mennonite historian, and father of Elizabeth Bender. (Photograph taken around 1894.)

fifty. And I think it was fifty-fifty because my father really was, as I said, very much a disciple of, and in personal correspondence with Dr. Keller, and so he had great incentive to publish with Keller's encouragement.

**Gross:** Let me ask the question even stronger than that: Was John Funk historically oriented, or was he sort of an eclectic . . .

**Bender:** I think he caught his main interest in history from my father because he encouraged my father in writing those things. Funk had been a mission worker in Chicago and also a business man, and I don't think that his interest in history had been very much sharpened.

**Gross:** Until your father came along.

**Bender:** I think that's right. Yes.

**Gross:** Why do you think Funk allowed history to enter his *Herald of Truth*?

**Bender:** Funk was really more of an intellectual than people give him credit for. I think that he published things on as high a level as he possibly could, considering the intellectual state, or let us say, educational state of the church at that time. Things had to be very simple, and not too theological. And so he was very open to history.

**Gross:** What was John Funk's larger purpose for doing this type of thing? What was his vision?

**Bender:** The church. Yes. I got a glimpse into some of that when I read the Funk letters in the Archives. He was engaged to a girl in the East. She

wouldn't go to Chicago, and he couldn't have done what he wanted to do—start a paper—in the East, and so they broke off their engagement. But then, there are no letters to indicate it—I don't know if they've been destroyed, or what—suddenly, they're getting married and living in Elkhart. So I think that's how Elkhart began to grow into that church center for enlightenment—whatever you want to call it. And J.S. Coffman worked out from there too a great deal. He was connected with that.

**Gross:** What do you surmise is the reason: Funk is in Chicago, his fiancée is in the East, they end up in Elkhart. She wanted to remain Mennonite? She wanted to stay in a Mennonite setting?

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** She was willing to go to Elkhart, but maybe not to Chicago?

**Bender:** Yes. She absolutely refused in those letters to go to Chicago: 'I won't go, so we'd better break off our engagement. I love you but I'm not going to go to Chicago,' was the spirit of those letters.

**Gross:** So it was an accommodation perhaps for both?

**Bender:** Yes, it was an accommodation.

**Gross:** Let me ask another question: in the 1920s to '40s, we needed the Anabaptist Vision in an essential way, and we finally got it in intellectual form. We knew in our bones that that's what we are. In the Daniel Kauffman era, from around 1898 to 1944, there were also important, positive happenings.

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** What, during the Funk era, let's say from 1864 to 1898, what was the problem, and who helped to solve the problem for the church? Who helped to keep the church going?

**Bender:** Well, I would say, Funk and J. S. Coffman. And they were friends. My father often talked about Coffman's revival meetings. That must have been a very big contribution: to sort of reviving some sort of spiritual, instead of just a legalistic Mennonitism. Before that, I've been impressed—in reading through Archives correspondence from the era—by the fact that if the Mennonites got in contact with outside, real spiritual leaders, whose sermons weren't all 'thou shalt and thou shalt not,' they left the church. So often, they left the church. But beginning with the Funk and Coffman era—I

guess you can't really separate the two—the church was beginning to be receptive to some more deeply religious aspects of Mennonitism. They hadn't thought so much about the idea of discipleship yet at that time, but about living—phrases like 'in Christ' and so on rather than just obeying the commandments of Christ. Of course, then came that division in the Funk era giving rise to the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and the conservative Wislerites.

**Gross:** The Daniel Brenneman and the Jacob Wisler groups.

**Bender:** Yes. And that break is a chapter by itself. But there you see Funk still holding the line of the church, trying to hold things together while the man who is very strongly on the spiritual side, Brenneman, goes one way, and Wisler, who won't endure part singing in the church because 'that isn't Mennonite,' goes the other way. This has elements of the legalistic aspect of Mennonitism. But Funk was sort of in between and trying to hold things together.

**Gross:** Are you saying, then, that the church around 1860 had a lot of obeying the commandments, 'thou shalt; thou shalt not'?

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** And that John Funk never was like that himself.

**Bender:** That's right. He never was. How could he be if he lived in Chicago and had contact with other churches up there? I think the Chicago years made a profound impression on him.

**Gross:** So he could go apart from the church, get some distance and



Elizabeth Bender, teacher at Hesston College, 1920-21.



### John F. Funk, 1835-1930

*One-hundred-and-fifty years ago this year John Fretz Funk was born (April 6, 1835). In memory of Funk, and to remind us about a crucial era in the development of the Mennonite Church, we plan to publish some facts and ideas about Funk and his era that still lodge in the memory of those living in 1985. In this issue, Elizabeth Bender's reflections on "The John F. Funk Era" have been chosen to begin a series of commemorative pieces on the life of Funk, and his contributions to the Mennonite Church, especially from 1864 to 1908, as founder and editor of the Herald of Truth (and Herold der Wahrheit), which served as the central Mennonite organ during that time, helping to unify the Mennonite Church as a denomination, and leading to the birth of Mennonite General Conference in 1898.*

*Who was John F. Funk? MHB readers are encouraged to review "An Interview with John F. Funk," published in the October 1984 MHB. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, A Biography of John Fretz Funk, by Helen Kolb Gates, John Funk Kolb, Jacob Clemens Kolb, and Constance Kolb Sykes (1964), is the one book-length biography on this significant leader. A.C. Kolb, in the July and October 1932 issues of the Mennonite Quarterly Review, published his "John Fretz Funk, 1835-1930: An Appreciation." Past MHB issues over the decades of course also include articles about or by Funk.*

*Much more remains to be said about John F. Funk and his times. From the vantage point of 1985, facts fit together somewhat differently than they seemed to fit, in 1932, or even 1964, when the above interpretations were published.*

*We are therefore grateful to have at hand, in the form of oral interviews, additional insights into John F. Funk and his epoch, to appear in upcoming pages of the MHB.*

—Leonard Gross

reflect, and then he was willing to come back and serve.

**Bender:** Right.

**Gross:** And I understand you to say that it was John Horsch who brought history to Funk and Funk accepted it and saw it as important.

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** Let me ask the same question now about evangelism in the sense of J.S. Coffman. Did Coffman bring that to Funk, or was that more of a central thing in Funk from the beginning, the spiritual quest and the idea of renewal?

**Bender:** I believe it was in Funk from the beginning. I remember vaguely, in those letters, that he was interested in—perhaps the word "spiritual" gives a wrong slant to what I mean to say—at least something deeply religious.

**Gross:** Nonlegalistic?

**Bender:** Nonlegalistic. Yes. That's right.

**Gross:** A spiritual quality to life.

**Bender:** That's right.

**Gross:** The inner manifestations, but also the outer acts too, but non-legalistic. Whereas much of the church at that time was in a sense, or tended to be legalistic.

**Bender:** Of course, then there

came a time in the Elkhart church—I think it was connected with that same episode in which my father, and George Bender too, lost their jobs at Elkhart, when trouble arose in the Elkhart church, and Funk lost out. In every way he lost out. He was even silenced as a bishop in 1902. And then in 1908, Aaron Loucks' *Gospel Witness* bought out the Mennonite Publishing Company at Elkhart, and Scottdale's Mennonite Publishing House came into being. And then there is the story about the Mennonite Church's not living up to its agreement to pay Funk what it owed him, which seems to have alienated his children from the church. Also the Elkhart church squabble, when Funk was silenced, contributed to the alienation as well. And from there on, it was an uphill battle for Funk. I heard him preach a sermon when he was in his eighties, in his last years. He was still a very friendly and nice man to talk to. I had a pleasant talk with him; I didn't go into anything problematic, but he was very friendly, and he remembered my father kindly. I liked his spirit, and it wasn't rancorous at all. But in the meantime, he must have suffered a lot, with the breakdown of everything at

Elkhart that he had worked for and built up; and in the congregation.

**Gross:** I have a couple of questions. My thesis goes something like this: John Funk and J.S. Coffman promoted a revival, a pietistic or possibly holiness type of revival. Then around 1890 to 1900 something brand new came on the scene. Instead of a sort of Lutheran pietism, which as far as I'm concerned is compatible with Anabaptism—the inner experience—instead of that we had a dogmatic, Billy-Sunday type of element that was somehow qualitatively different, substantially different from what had come before.

**Bender:** I don't think that comes directly from Funk and Coffman. I think that came when some Mennonite students went to the university and picked up some different ideas than their Anabaptist and Mennonite preachers had told them. I don't think Funk or Coffman ever would have attacked any Mennonite ordinances. They were still Mennonites—even women's costume and so on. They never would have attacked those things—something which came with the college and seminary trained people, a little bit later. Now that doesn't say of course that Coffman's spirit didn't lead these people to go to school and get an education. It was an opening up. Coffman opened things up and sometimes it opened a little further than the Anabaptist spirit would have allowed.

**Gross:** Would you say that John Funk also opened things up.

**Bender:** Yes, I would. Yes.

**Gross:** You mentioned some university students. They were not the ones who caused John Funk problems in Elkhart.

**Bender:** No.

**Gross:** Was there in John Coffman and John Funk something of the Franconia Pietism and the inner Lutheran type of piety, contrasting with that of Daniel Kauffman and the others who came at that time: the new Daniel Kauffman era? This was not Lutheran, but rather a type of Calvinist structure—the 21 fundamentals.

**Bender:** I think that's a good analysis. Yes.

**Gross:** So that the Funk era came to an end.

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** And that the whole new theology was difficult for Funk to accept?



**Bender:** The trouble in the church with Funk came before the squabbles about liberalism. I don't know exactly what happened—partly the business dealings at the Elkhart Publishing Company; Funk refused to make a confession, or something like that, along the way. I think many of the people thirty years later thought Funk wasn't treated fairly, including the financial arrangements.

**Gross:** I have heard from several people that maybe John Funk was stubborn.

**Bender:** Yes. If he hadn't been, he would never have started a paper at all.

**Gross:** On the other hand, my feeling is that something of a person's character continues throughout life, and if John Funk in his late eighties, as you say, was forgiving and kindly and brotherly, I can only assume that that's the John Funk of the 1860s to 1890—that a lot of the problems surfaced after 1890 when Funk was “up against it,” whether in business, or because of new ideas from a younger generation, that simply didn't quite make sense to him: that his situation was anything but normal. He was being pushed into a corner and—I shouldn't be putting ideas into your mind. . . .

**Bender:** No. That's correct. Funk was pushed into a corner. That's right.

**Gross:** You said that the problems arose before the time that liberalism became a church issue.

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** Did the problems arise even before Fundamentalism came on the scene?

**Bender:** Yes. Fundamentalism came so close to the time of Funk's trouble. But I don't think that that had anything to do with it, or that there's any relationship there. I think that the trouble was more personal, that it didn't have much to do with church relationships except with that immediate congregation. That's what it was. It was local rather than churchwide trouble, in my mind.

**Gross:** Was the revival approach of John S. Coffman quite different from that of the evangelists who came after him?

**Bender:** Yes. Because, as I think of, say, Daniel Kauffman, and some of the others that came early, they put more emphasis on church ordinances than they did on the Christian life or the inward Christianity of pietism.

The J.S. Coffman movement, in my mind, is more pietistic than the spirit of any of the early twentieth-century evangelists that I had any contact with. Dan Kauffman was strong on the church ordinances, as you've already indicated. It was ‘you must obey the church,’ ‘you can't be a Christian unless you wear a bonnet if you're a woman.’ That's Dan Kauffman. And so, if you got up in the meetings of Dan Kauffman, that meant you're promising to be obedient to the rules of the church. If you got up in the meetings of J.S. Coffman, there wasn't much emphasis on things of that sort of obedience to the ordinances. There was obedience, but more in a general sense. ‘Do what God asks you to do’ rather than, I think, ‘what the church asks you to do.’

**Gross:** Well, are you saying that Daniel Kauffman then made a jump to the pre-1860 ‘thou shalt; thou shalt not’?

**Bender:** Yes, he did, definitely. But he also had the gift of pulling the church together with the device of Mennonite General Conference, which not all the conferences joined—as you know, because you come out of Franconia, one of the “renegade” conferences. And Lancaster didn't either. And some of the others had not joined the Mennonite General Conference. But most of those farther west did—Missouri and Kansas and so on. I guess it wasn't much farther west than that, at that time. He pulled things together, but on that basis of obedience to the traditional Mennonite mores and practices and customs. He was very strong on utter plainness. It wasn't the idea of simplicity. It was an emphasis on plainness. For instance, he didn't want his wife to have geraniums in her window. That's not plain. He stood for absolute plainness, ‘without this and without that.’ Daniel Kauffman was a very friendly man, nice to talk to. He very rarely scolded anyone in person, although it seems that he sometimes delegated other people to do that, leading to a confession in church—for the person, for example, who had worn a little turban while in Europe. This type of thing happened repeatedly.

**Gross:** I have still another question about Scottdale. I remember you told me once that Scottdale was fading away pretty quickly and that at a certain point it came back. Tell me

about that—in number, in spirit.

**Bender:** Well, before my time it had been a lively settlement. Edward Yoder wrote a book analyzing that whole period. I don't know why it died out. Overholt Whiskey was founded by a Mennonite at Alverton. The founder's daughter was a woman in her seventies or eighties. You know, to someone who is 13 years old, if you're sixty or seventy, you're as old as Methuselah! And so she was an old lady living all by herself, except that she had a pet. This is quite incidental and extraneous; her pet was a rooster. She thought it was a hen when she made a pet of it, and so it had a girl's name. And when we had prayer meetings there, this rooster sat on her shoulder. So she was a “character,” and the story I tell should be seen from the vantage point of a 13-year-old. When the collection was taken, she lifted up her voluminous outer skirt and took a coin out of the pocket of her top petticoat and dropped it into the offering plate. Well, that's what was left of the old congregation. This woman was about the only member left. There was a Stoner family that I know once was Steiner, but they're all out now. I don't believe I can name any others of the original members, except Aaron Loucks. And most of the Loucks brothers were still Mennonites. Their wives and children, with one exception, were not.

There's very little left of old Scottdale. But then, the Publishing House brought in people from everywhere: editors from Ohio, and a lot of people from the Pennsylvania communities of Springs and Lancaster, and Il-



John F. Funk, ca. 1870/80.



linois; and that built up a separate Scottdale congregation, with hardly any connection with the original Scottdale community. The new Scottdale church was located near the Publishing House, revived through outside people. It is not indigenous at all, except through Aaron Loucks' influence. That would have been the only thing left. And Dan Kauffman soon superseded that in influence. Aaron Loucks was a very good man, and a good-hearted man, too.

**Gross:** So at that time, Scottdale was the center of the church?

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** From 1908 to 1925 or so.

**Bender:** Yes. And the only reason it was in such an out-of-the-way place was because that's where Aaron Loucks was, who started the *Gospel Witness*.

**Gross:** Was the new evangelicalism and evangelism also partly responsible for the revival of the Scottdale church, or was it mainly an influx from outside?

**Bender:** It was an influx from outside congregations. Yes. They were all from the outside. That's really amazing how they lived together in peace. It was controlled pretty rigidly, but they all, even those from Illinois, fit in.

**Gross:** I thought I remember your telling me once that the church in a general way was going down and that something of the Daniel Kauffman era of evangelism was really quite a help in bringing back the spirit, and so on.

**Bender:** Yes. That is true. I don't think that that had much to do, specifically, with Scottdale. But in the church in general, the Kauffman era of evangelism probably opened the door for Scottdale work to be accepted so readily.

**Gross:** So the idea is still correct, even though maybe the revival of Scottdale was due to an influx from the outside: that throughout the church, something new was on the scene. A post-Funk era which allowed for revival. But it was a type of revival quite different from that of Funk and J.S. Coffman.

**Bender:** Yes. It was more of the Billy Sunday type, in most cases.

**Gross:** Can we say that Funk and Coffman already were in on the revival? Or was theirs a revival that failed?

**Bender:** No. I wouldn't say it failed. No. I think what came after was

built on that. The revivals that came after that were built on what they did, even though they took different paths. I don't think you can make a clean line between the two. Let me think a moment. (Pause.) It depends on the location—the locale from which the evangelist came. Some evangelists were pretty rigid. That wasn't J.S. Coffman's spirit. And although later evangelists did not follow in the spiritual footsteps of Coffman, the fact that other evangelists could come along was probably due to the openings that J.S. Coffman made. But some of the evangelists were really deeply religious persons rather than deeply orthodox, if there is a difference there.

**Gross:** J.S. Coffman was deeply religious, a man who could also talk about the spirit of progress.

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** And orthodoxy was not yet a church issue.

**Bender:** Liberalism wasn't a question yet then.

**Gross:** Ah, yes! Liberalism became an issue, at that exact point where some Mennonites had become "orthodox." That's the point where the liberal-conservative controversy had begun!

**Bender:** You've put your thumb right on it. Yes. That's right. I think that's very accurate.

**Gross:** We've discovered something significant, today! (Pause.)

**Bender:** You've lived through the C.F. Derstine era: how would you classify him?

**Gross:** I saw C.F. Derstine as a pietist at heart, and not the fundamentalist he seemed to be on the surface.

**Bender:** Yes. I agree. I would say that too.

**Gross:** C.F. Derstine held that human relationships are much more important than correct doctrine. That's how I type him. I felt he was a good person to have around. He added flair. We needed entertainment in those years, and he gave us something of that, yet as a sincere, warmhearted, and loving evangelist.

**Bender:** Yes, he did. That's right.

(—To be continued.)

## Recent Publications

Reiff, Eli E., Jr. and Amos H. Reiff, Compilers. *Reiff Family History, 1735-1982*. Gordonville, Pennsylvania, 1982. Pp. 240. \$8.00.

Rickert, Ruth F. *Rickert Family History: 1749-1982*. Rockville Centre, New York, 1982. Pp. 171. \$12.00. Order from author, 56 Dogwood Lane, Rockville Centre, NY 11570.

Schmidt, Ervin H., Editor. *The David and Eva Schmidt Family Record, 1835-1981*. Illinois, 1982. Pp. 446. \$15.00.

Schroeder, Katherine, Editor. *Karl Hildebrand: Family Tree*. Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1982. Pp. 190. \$20.00. Order from author, 528 Manchester, Winnipeg, Man. R3T 1N8.

Sherrick, James Wiley II. *Beginning With the Nation: A Sherrick Family History*. Edinboro, Pennsylvania, 1976. Pp. 60. \$8.00. Order from author, Box 137, Edinboro, PA 16412.

Shirk, Hal. *Shirk-Sherk Genealogy*. Texarkana, Texas, 1982. Pp. 146. \$12.00.

Slagle, Henry and Maudie, Compilers. *Family Record of Christian J. Miller and Catherine Gingerich*. Wellman, Iowa, 1973. Pp. 54. \$2.00. Order from authors, Route 2, Wellman, IA 52356.

Slagle, Maudie (Brenneman), Compiler. *Jacob J. Brenneman and Sally Elizabeth Fuller Family Record*. Wellman, Iowa, 1977. \$2.00. Order from author, Route 2, Wellman, IA 52356.

Snyder, C. Arnold. *The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler*. Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1984. Pp. 261.

Stauffer, Ezra N., Compiler. *Stauffer Genealogy of America: and History of the Descendants of Jacob Stauffer*. Goshen, Indiana, 1982. Pp. 901. \$14.00. Order from Willis W. Stauffer, R.D. 2, Box 252, New Holland, PA 17557.

Wade, Mary Helen, Compiler. *Jacob G. Meyer: A Family History*. Sterling, Illinois, 1983. \$5.00.

Yantzi, Ruth and Lorraine Roth, Compilers. *Family History and Genealogy of Joseph and Catherine (Boshart) Jantzi . . .* Kitchener, Ontario, 1982. Pp. 437. \$20.00. Order from Lorraine Roth, 37 Ahrens St. W., Kitchener, Ont. N2H 4B6.

Yost, Erma M., Editor and Com-



piler. *Yost Cookbook and Genealogy*. Hesston, Kansas, 1983. Pp. 430. \$6.00.

## Book Reviews

*The Waldensians: the First 800 Years*. by Giorgio Tourn. Italy: Claudiana, 1980. Pp. 244. \$8.95. Distributed by Friendship Press, P.O. Box 37844, Cincinnati, OH 45237.

Some of us who claim the Free Church tradition as our own have had for generations a certain wistfulness about the Anabaptist vision, namely that it predates the 16th century Reformation, indeed, that it spiritually, if not historically, originated with Jesus Christ and the Apostles. Walter Klaassen's book entitled *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant* gives some support to this conviction. We are aware that these predecessors did not hold in all respects to the group of convictions we now call Anabaptist or Mennonite yet these forerunners held to a number of these with sufficient tenacity to be our spiritual cousins, if not half-brothers. Leonard Verduin's *The Reformers and their Stepchildren* gives this view further support.

Among these relatives that preceded classical Anabaptism were such notables of church history as Peter Waldo, John Wycliffe and John Hus. While these persons do not reach all the way back to the Apostles, they do substantially pre-date the Reformation, and Waldo leads the trio inasmuch as he was converted about 1175. The subsequent story is such that the author of this book on the Waldensians subtitles it "The First Evangelical Protestants—and Still a Vital Church."

The author is pastor of the Waldensian Church in Torre Pellice, Italy, where the Waldensians have been for more than two centuries. It is located in what are known as the Waldensian Valleys. Tourn has also published a new Italian edition of Calvin's *Institutes*, an *Annotated New Testament*, and a biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He has been editor of the *Waldensian Weekly* and is Vice-President of the Society for Waldensian Studies in Torre Pellice.

I shall never forget the rare privilege of attending, many years ago, a Sunday morning service at the Waldensian Church in Rome to dis-

cover there, after the service, not only that Pastor Comba spoke excellent English but that my good friend and one-time Goshen College classmate by the same surname was his nephew.

As I read this excellent history, I was impressed again and again by the many similarities between the Waldensian and Anabaptist experience, e.g., their early "Schleitheim" in Bergamo in 1218; their default into violence somewhat like that found in our Russian Mennonite experience; their agreement at one point to live passively as a tolerated group in the mountains; the building of their first meetinghouse; their self-characterization as a fraternal solidarity rather than a carefully organized and comprehensive structure "a la" state church; their venture in apocalypticism; their "hidden" churches; their practice, at times, of first building a school in a new settlement and then a meetinghouse, not to mention the colonizing in Uruguay and the Argentine Chaco. All these sound so much like chapters from our own history, yet there were marked differences also such as their strong attraction to Calvinism, their retention of infant baptism and their open communion—all dissonant emphases to Anabaptist history.

At no point in this entire book is there so much as a mention of the Anabaptists even when reference is made to their contacts in Switzerland, France and Germany. Nor yet does this admittedly brief account deign to mention that the Dutch Mennonites gave them financial support in the 19th century toward rebuilding their devastated communities, or that the Mennonite Central Committee had its headquarters in Torre Pellice during its relief work among them in 1946-49, nor that Harold S. Bender was a fraternal delegate to their Synod meeting in 1948 and a lecturer in their Seminary. On the other hand, we Mennonites need to know that the Waldensian preachers helped establish our Mennonite settlement in Uruguay. We are poorer for not being informed of these precursors to the tradition we love and the convictions we share.

I commend author Tourn and the Claudiana press for their service to the large English-speaking audience

in the preparation and publication of this book. Many of the chapters have appended to them English translations of choice historical documents exemplifying the history just recounted. The book is well illustrated though not so well indexed.

—Gerald C. Studer

*The Mennonite Church in India*. By John Allen Lapp. Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1972. Pp. 278. \$8.95. (Number 14 in Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History series.)

The prospect of a sabbatical in India propelled me to read once again John A. Lapp's excellent book on the origin and development of the Mennonite Church there. The passing of the years since this book's release has not lessened the timeliness of its message. Lapp sets the stage for this pioneer effort in (Old) Mennonite foreign missions with brevity and forthrightness, yet not without compassion. The author's own membership in the denomination analyzed does not dull his objectivity and candor. His maturity and experience in research and in the church is evident throughout.

The fact that the winds of the Spirit were able to blow through the American Mennonite Church and thus move the Mennonite Church to mission is noted even though the church was largely found at that time in rural German enclaves. Furthermore, few of its members had more than an elementary education and there was no formal organization within the Mennonite Church beyond the local conference. "Their theology, which was a simple biblical faith strengthened by a strong sense of nonconformity to the larger world, including Christendom, produced a quietism that had long since smothered the inherent radicalism of the 'left wing' of Protestantism" is a good summary statement concerning the Mennonite Church in the late 1800s.

This restiveness found ways of mobilizing itself and was aided by the deeply ingrained conviction that faith in Christ calls for action as well as belief. What they lacked in understanding, they made up in zeal. Without being patronizing, it could be said of the church what Jesus said to his disciples when they were



critical of his kindness toward Mary after she had anointed his feet with oil: "(They did) what they could." They were so convinced of the Lord calling them out to witness to Him that they were able to begin a work and adjust their strategy again and again. The reader today, with a world awareness that is far better informed than it was then, must resist the temptation to look critically upon their responses to an utterly new and very different culture. The marvel is not that they made mistakes but that they were possessed of a perseverance and a faithfulness to carry on in spite of their encounter with a culture "a world away."

The passing of time only sets in bolder relief the enormous contributions made to the American Mennonite church's life and vitality by such persons as J.A. Ressler, Geo. J. Lapp, M.C. Lehman, and J.D. Graber, to risk the mention of only a few of what could be many names.

The struggle to Indianize the church constitutes a wrenching chapter to read even now for the struggle is not over yet. Two sentences, even in their ambiguity, stand out: "The agonized cry of being isolated from one's social order is a question every missionary must seriously consider. Perhaps this statement more than any other in this study summarizes both the glory and the agony of the Christian missionary enterprise." Is the author speaking of the evangelized or the evangelizer? In fact, the statements are true in either case.

Instances are cited illustrating "the case with which a free church mission could slip into a Constantinian situation of creating a religious socio-political community" giving great cause for serious contemplation. Perhaps we shall yet come to face in this land what our Indian work had to face years ago when the presence of Christian schools brought into focus the conflict between Christianity and the secular state which was then further complicated by a resurgent Hinduism.

One of the author's conclusions is that the American Mennonite Mission in India served as the model mission in both success and failure. This book does not have a "and they lived happily ever after" kind of ending. Lapp lays before the reader a situation that is "an unfinished affair in a not unhappy paradox. . . . Though

a paradox, it is a paradox of hope." Reading this book is to experience a deep plowing into one's spirit so as to jolt us into realizing just how much we take for granted that cannot be taken for granted when Christianity is introduced into a culture that had known only Hinduism for a couple thousand years. It takes enormous energy to move a people in a profoundly new direction. No wonder the book closes with the expressed hope that the Indian church's ministry may not be a folding up but

an unfolding of new vision and vigor to meet the opportunities before them to be God's people and to do His bidding.

This is a perceptive addition to the growing library of missiological studies. It is well documented, illustrated, and indexed. It will help us avoid a too-parochial view of the Body of Christ and give us a sense of the birthpangs suffered as the church emerges in another part of "all the world."

—Gerald C. Studer

## John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest Report

1983-1984

### Class I (Graduate and Seminary)

- First:** "The Mennonite Privilegium in Paraguay: Some Historical and Theological Considerations," by Werner Franz and Darrel Heidebrecht (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries).
- Second:** "The Dynamic Faith: Menno Simons and the Boundaries of Confessional Restraint," by Douglas D. Schulz (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries).
- Third:** "From Quiet Eschatology to Quiet Revolution: A Study of Anabaptist-Mennonite Eschatology," by Joseph S. Miller (Villanova University).

### Class II (College Juniors and Seniors)

- First:** "The One Thing Lacking—or the Status of Women Faculty at Eastern Mennonite College, 1917 to 1980," by Ruth K. Lehman (James Madison University).
- Second:** "Anna Brons and Ludwig Keller: Partners for Historical Renewal," by Mary Sprunger (Bethel College).
- Third:** "Peter Weber: A Mennonite Minister with the Spirit of Pietism," by Mervin E. Horst (Goshen College).

### Class III (College Freshmen and Sophomores)

- First:** "Richard Watson: George Brunk's Favorite Theologian," by Rachel Clemens (Bluffton College).
- Second:** "John Horsch: Mennonite Fundamentalist," by Janeen Bertsche (Bluffton College).
- Third:** "Views of Atonement in the *Christian Exponent*," by Janeen Bertsche (Bluffton College).

### Class IV (High School)

- First:** "A Comparison of Mennonite Doctrine and Communist Ideology," by Greg Newswanger (Bethany Christian High School).
- Second:** "A Research Paper on Nonconformity," by Laurie Lauterbach (Western Mennonite High School).
- Third:** "Elam W. Stauffer: African Mission Pioneer," by Carol R. Shenk (Lancaster Mennonite High School).

—Leonard Gross, Contest Manager



# Mennonite Historical Bulletin

Vol. XLVI

April, 1985

ISSN 0025-9357

No. 2

## Anna Hoover Bollman, One Hundred Years Old

*Anna Hoover Bollman celebrated her one-hundredth birthday last November. She was born November 17, 1884, and during her first sixty or more years of life, attended the Yellow Creek Mennonite Church. Both of her parents, Noah S. Hoover and Sarah Kreider, were public school teachers, and Anna followed in their professional footsteps. She attended Elkhart Institute in 1902-1903, during its last year of existence, passed the state teacher's examination, and then began to teach in the fall of 1903. She was a full-time student at Goshen College from 1905 to 1907, and again from 1909 to 1910, when she graduated from the Goshen College Academy. She continued her education after that at Goshen College, but also at the Indiana University extension Winona Lake, through summer and evening courses. (See the Goshen News, November 16, 1984, p. 8, for further details of Anna Hoover Bollman's eventful life—an article by Gail Widmoyer, "Former Teacher Reminisces.")*

*At 100 years of age, Mrs. Bollman's clear mind and memory allow her to step into the nineteenth century, into the earlier phases of the John Funk era. To have the living memory of one who can differentiate between the earlier and the later John F. Funk is a godsend for the historian, who otherwise could work only from incomplete documentation on paper, on the nature of the Mennonite times, in general, and of John Funk's role in particular. There was indeed an earlier John Funk who faced challenges in the 1860s, '70s, '80s, and '90s. He responded to the ever-new challenges in the 1860s to the '80s in a manner quite different from those in the 1890s. There is mounting evidence of reasons for this in Funk that go beyond the aging process, or stubbornness, or even dire economic circumstance.*

*Anna Hoover Bollman adds substantially to our knowledge of John Funk in the late 1890s; it remains, now, to interpret the progression of these events of the Mennonite era of the 1890s to about 1925, for a truer understanding of Funk himself, within the larger Mennonite context. Fortunately, we*

*have oral history accounts, helping us in this regard, that we plan to publish in future issues of the MHB.*

—Leonard Gross

### On the Funk Era

#### Interview with Anna Hoover Bollman

**Leonard Gross:** Today is May 3, 1983, and I am speaking with Anna Hoover Bollman, a ninety-eight-year-old woman from the Yellow Creek Congregation, who was baptized by John F. Funk. She is currently residing at the Greencroft Center in Room 38 at Central Manor. Am I correct, Mrs. Bollman that you grew up in the Yellow Creek Congregation?

**Anna Hoover Bollman:** Yes, I attended Yellow Creek from the time I was a little girl until I was in my sixties.

**Gross:** What is the most important part of your faith as a Mennonite? What makes you Mennonite?

**Bollman:** I come from a Mennonite family. My grandfather was Mennonite, and my grandparents on both sides of the family were Mennonites. I suppose that had some influence, more or less. And then now of course I wouldn't change, although I have broadened my vision—that is, I feel that other faiths outside of the Mennonite Church are commendable. But my choice is still Mennonite.

**Gross:** Why?

**Bollman:** I guess I have never been approached exactly like that before; since we are hearing so much about the peace emphasis, I still feel that that is where I want to witness for that part of people's experience, I guess.

**Gross:** So the quality of life is awfully important to you: the quality of faith.

**Bollman:** Yes.

**Gross:** Was this central, also for your parents?

**Bollman:** Yes. I had a very deep concern at the time of the Spanish American War in 1898. I was afraid my father would be called into service, but he had a finger off and he had told me that that was the finger to pull the trigger on the gun, and he said that finger is off and that was a big relief to me as a little girl.

**Gross:** Did your father have convictions about warfare?

**Bollman:** Oh, yes.

**Gross:** We were talking about Yellow Creek . . .

**Bollman:** The ministers in Elkhart County used to have, what we called at that time, Home Conference. I don't know just exactly what they call it now. They would meet occasionally and have their minister's meeting. They nearly always met at Yellow Creek Church, and the Yellow Creek



Anna Hoover, 1910.



Church at the present time is still rather conspicuous for meetings. And then after my grandfather passed away, probably a half-year before I was born—as long as he was there he had been deacon—his widow continued feeding, spreading the table for these ministers that met there for Home Conference. And I remember that because I lived right there in the neighborhood, and my father went to these meetings and so I know that the ministers would go to my step-grandmother Hoover's house and she would put up a big table and feed those ministers.

**Gross:** The Yellow Creek Congregation has a long tradition in some of these things.

**Bollman:** Oh, yes. They do. I know about the time when we had the different divisions there. You see, we had the Wisler people, along with our group: we had to change off in the use of the meetinghouse. We had it one Sunday morning, and they had it one Sunday morning. And the time they had it on Sunday morning, my folks and a few other folks would go maybe to some other Sunday school around—probably Salem, or to some place. Then we had Sunday school in the afternoon or evening on that off-Sunday. Then after they built the new meetinghouse, we had it to ourselves.

**Gross:** What was the Mennonite Church like in 1884 when you were born?

**Bollman:** Off hand, I suppose I would say we were like the Wisler group, if you know what they are like. We were very much as they are. But we had Sunday school and they didn't.

**Gross:** Who were the Wisler people?

**Bollman:** They were conscientious people. And I think in general they are now. The Wisler people today are a growing church, although they have never accepted the Sunday school. They don't have Sunday school. And I believe they do not have Sunday evening church services. But I think in their views they

are broadening. I am surprised that they have been able to carry on all these hundred years, and still don't have Sunday school.

**Gross:** What you are saying, is that the Mennonite Church—Yellow Creek to be specific—changed more over the decades than did the Wislers.

**Bollman:** Yes.

**Gross:** What was good about the Mennonites in 1884? You said they were conscientious, and that they held on to the way of peace.

**Bollman:** In general they did. Of course, I have to base my ideas, especially, on my father. My father took a little different stand than some other folks. I think my father made himself a black mark when he was a young deacon—of course, he was not young anymore, but when he wasn't too long in the service he advocated tithing. That has been implanted in me ever since I was a young girl. My father used to send for tracts and he would pass them out, but there were a lot of folks around there that I don't think fell in line with his ideas. But he advocated tithing. He was a Moody man. That is, he read Moody's literature and read his books. My father was a good reader. He somehow felt that Moody was doing a big work. He wasn't afraid to pass out tracts or express himself. As for our offerings, when I think about Sunday school, our secretary would go around with his hand from class to class, to take the offering. People would put in a penny perhaps.

**Gross:** So tithing was a new idea, which only a few people accepted?

**Bollman:** Not too many in our church at Yellow Creek accepted the idea of tithing at that time. They have now, I think. A lot of folks have. But at the time my father first advocated that, I think he made himself a black mark.

**Gross:** Why did they resist the idea?

**Bollman:** Well, they just hadn't been taught that . . . I don't know how my father got on to that more than from the Bible.

**Gross:** Tradition apparently played an important role in the church. What was the Mennonite tradition at that time?

**Bollman:** Garb was one—not so much in our branch as it was among the Wisler people. And Daniel Brenneman, by the way, had an outlook on life that a lot of our people just felt that things were going a little beyond their tradition, I guess. Brenneman was a little more missionary minded, I think, than most other Mennonites at that time. He was probably just a little broader in his missionary outlook than what some of our people were. Daniel Brenneman had been one of the early founders in the Yellow Creek Church. He was interested in revival meetings, and did not oppose emotional expressions—that is, amens and things like that. And some of the people didn't fall for that. So that was one of the things that led to division.

Now when John F. Funk came along, and J. S. Coffman, they held meetings in our congregation. J.S. Coffman was out there and we had a wonderful revival. I think there were sixteen or eighteen converts at that time. Now this was when our people accepted revival meetings—there had been a time when they didn't have such meetings.

**Gross:** Do you personally remember that time, before which revival meetings were accepted?

**Bollman:** Yes. I remember the time when we didn't have revival meetings at Yellow Creek. I think that J.S. Coffman was the first one to introduce that.

**Gross:** Do you see revival meetings as something good that came on the scene?

**Bollman:** Yes. Yes. They were an asset to the church's growth. That is the way I feel about it.

**Gross:** I sometimes believe that in every generation we need revival, we need renewal.

**Bollman:** Yes. We use that word now. I think about that a number of times: the word renewal is a recent expression. Renewal, I think, ex-

---

The *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* is published quarterly by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church and distributed to the members of the Mennonite Historical Association. **Editor:** Leonard Gross; **Assistant Editor:** Rachel Shenk; **Book Review Editor:** Gerald C. Studer; **Office Editor:** Bryan Kehr; **Production and Design:** Julia Lind; **Associate Editors:** Rafael Falcon, Jan Gleysteen, Merle Good, Amos B. Hoover, Albert N. Keim, James Mininger, Winifred Paul, Lorraine Roth, Shirley Showalter, Wilmer Swope, and J. C. Wenger. Dues for regular membership (\$5), contributing membership (\$10-25), supporting membership (\$50), sustaining membership (\$100-250), and sponsoring membership (\$500 and above) per year may be sent to the editor. (Library rate: \$5 per year.) Articles and news items should be addressed to the editor, 1700 S. Main Street, Goshen, Indiana 46526 (Tel. 219/533-3161, Ext. 477).

Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts*. Microfilms of Volumes I-XLIV of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* are available from: University Microfilms, Inc., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.





Noah S. Hoover and Sarah A. Kreider, parents of Anna, 1882.

presses a little bit more a Christian's experience in life. You go back to what you had, and add to it.

**Gross:** I think you are correct. Did the Mennonites lose a lot of their youth in the 1880s?

**Bollman:** Oh, yes. I think they did.

**Gross:** And did the renewal efforts of J.S. Coffman help that?

**Bollman:** That helped to build up our church at Yellow Creek.

**Gross:** Tell me your impressions of J.S. Coffman.

**Bollman:** Oh, I held him in high esteem. That is, he was a man that was so nice to have around. He was so kind. His mannerisms were so good, and if he once knew your name, he knew it. He could speak your name: "Why, there is Anna." Things like that, you know. I remember well that when he ate at our table, we were always glad to have J.S. Coffman around, because of his personal attitudes toward everything. And I think everybody liked him. At least I never heard of anyone that didn't.

**Gross:** Was Coffman a hellfire and brimstone type preacher?

**Bollman:** No. Not that I recall. I don't believe he was. I believe that he appealed more to our relation to our God.

**Gross:** John S. Coffman helped to revive the church, helped to bring

renewal?

**Bollman:** Yes. I would say that. John S. Coffman was just head and shoulders above a lot of other folks and he knew that he must not press that too hard upon the people he had inside; to me he was an outstanding man. But a lot of people did not accept it.

**Gross:** Are you glad for progress, and for the change that led to renewal?

**Bollman:** Yes. Yes. In meditating on some of this, I come back to something that I said to somebody. We had a young people's meeting in the Nappanee Church, and a young man was criticizing our parents strongly for being too reserved, and I said, they lived in their time, and that they were conscientious in the things that they believed. Of course, I don't exactly like to use the word sincere because some folks can be sincere and be very, very sincere in the wrong thing. But I didn't like the expression that this young man made about our parents who didn't fall for everything that the people in our church were advocating at that time, that was, oh, fifty years ago. But I said, they were conscientious in what they did. In some things more so than today. I can distinctly remember that on Saturday my father would go to the hay in the haymow, throw down his hay so that he wouldn't have to go up into the haymow because he observed the Sabbath. And now, to me, there are so many things that have come in. Of course, I have to watch myself. I can live back pretty far. And I can sometimes criticize the people for doing the things that I think are maybe desecration of the Sabbath. Maybe not, but for me, I couldn't have done it, and I wouldn't yet.

**Gross:** You can think back pretty far: four or five generations.

**Bollman:** Yes. I think so. Sometimes I don't know if it's all correct or not.

**Gross:** We go by our impressions. Who else was important during those first five, ten, fifteen years of your life?

**Bollman:** J.F. Funk. Now up until the time that J.F. Funk began to disagree a little bit with some things, about the time the Elkhart Institute started, I think from then on, Funk probably went down hill a little bit. J.F. Funk baptized me, and I was one of the last to be baptized by J.F. Funk because I think he was our bishop maybe a year or two after

that. Most of the folks were baptized in the house. At the time I was baptized at Yellow Creek, we were baptized in the stream. We would kneel in the water and then he would take water from the stream, and baptize by pouring, just like we do now.

And then, for some reason or another, J.F. Funk and some of the Elkhart Institute folks, I guess, just didn't rub shoulders too well any more. I know that my father was interested in the Elkhart Institute. They had a committee meeting. Why they had this committee meeting, I don't know. But I know that my father and mother went out to J.F. Funk's home to talk things over about something. My mother was very much concerned. J.F. Funk said, I will put you all out of the church. He was talking about the ministers and the people, I suppose, in Elkhart County and the surrounding Mennonite Church. My mother was very much alarmed. My father said, Funk couldn't do that.

**Gross:** This does not sound like the John F. Funk of earlier years.

**Bollman:** Oh, no. No, indeed.

**Gross:** Was there a difference?

**Bollman:** Yes, there was, I think. You know, he was head and shoulders above his ancestors in Pennsylvania, I think. When those Russian Mennonites came across here in the 1870s, they would stop here at Elkhart. It was kind of a stopping station. Why, Funk would take care of those people at great personal



John Coffman, 1895.



sacrifice. He would see to it that those people were taken care of. I felt that J.F. Funk was a broad-minded man. That's the way I felt about him.

**Gross:** That was before you were born.

**Bollman:** Yes, that happened before. They would often pass through Elkhart, you know, some of those folks. And, then, Funk having the headquarters as he did there, he would look after them.

**Gross:** When were you baptized?

**Bollman:** I think it was in 1899—let's see, if I was born in '84, I was fifteen when I was baptized: Would that make it 1899?

**Gross:** Eighteen-ninety nine or 1900. It could have been one of those two years. John Funk was silenced in 1902, so if you were baptized in 1899 or 1900, that would be about two years before that. Now, you are saying that John Funk changed around this time?

**Bollman:** Yes. I think maybe the pressure was put on him. He just couldn't quite take it, maybe. And I am not sure, maybe he was pressed a little hard. I don't know.

**Gross:** What pressures?

**Bollman:** Maybe about broadening about some things. I just don't know because they went and started that other paper. I don't exactly know what the friction was, there. You know, the one that started at Scottdale, the *Gospel Witness*, which later merged into the *Gospel Herald*. If I were to put my finger on what caused that trouble, I couldn't.

**Gross:** All you know is that John Funk was not so brotherly when your father went to the committee meeting that evening and Funk said, 'I will put them all out.'

**Bollman:** Yes.

**Gross:** Tell me about John Funk's wife.

**Bollman:** I don't know too much about her, I did read something not too long ago about her. She was, I was going to say, imposed upon, but John Funk was so taken up with his work and doing things, helping people, and seeing to it that these Russian Mennonites, for example, had conveyance to go here and there and get out and find new places and she would have to just—I don't know. She just helped out as far as I know. But, you never heard much about her. I just vaguely recall how she looked. She was quite a tall woman.

**Gross:** How was John Funk

earlier? What were your first impressions of John Funk? What was he like?

**Bollman:** Oh, in our congregation I think everybody was glad when they saw him; they wanted to hear him at Yellow Creek. Several times I heard people make the remark: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." John Funk would get up and repeat that wherever he went—at Salem or other churches. And he would say, 'Now remember that as John Funk's select chapter'—Psalm 103 I guess it is. And so he was very well thought of at that time.

**Gross:** You and others enjoyed his sermons?

**Bollman:** Yes. Of course I was just a young girl of 15, maybe. Your outlook isn't too broad, so I don't know whether my judgement or my comments on that would be just. A girl of 15 has to change a lot.

**Gross:** Surely, yet I can only appeal to your memory. Now you mentioned that J.S. Coffman was a kindly person; a fatherly type. How was John Funk in this regard?

**Bollman:** He was not quite as friendly, but there was just a difference in personality there. Some folks, you know, are that way. The first time you meet them you know you just fall for them.

**Gross:** And that was J.S. Coffman. And John Funk was a bit different.

**Bollman:** Yes. But my respect for Funk was good. I felt he was a very good man. Of course I guess my attitude changed a little bit after that experience with the church: he wasn't, in the Yellow Creek Church, what he had been before.

**Gross:** Yes. But you are saying, it seemed almost all of a sudden, that John Funk changed.

**Bollman:** In my own experience, I would say that. He just wilted, I guess. Maybe not wilted, maybe things just antagonized him more. I don't know. You know, sometimes people just assert themselves a little more when they are under pressure, and they just fly up.

But of course, after his silencing in 1902, why, the people began to respect him again, and he somehow gained the respect of a whole lot of people in the Mennonite Church. I don't know just how Goshen College stood on that, but I know that in general, a lot of folks felt kindly towards Funk.

**Gross:** Let me ask one last question. What do you think about the women's liberation movement today?

**Bollman:** I've just accepted it, I guess. What would I gain by not accepting it? Of course, I could be antagonistic about it, but then, I sometimes take myself to task there, and I think, "Well, that's what you've always been doing. You've lived it before you knew there was women's liberation." I don't know the time when I wouldn't do things that they asked me to do in the Church, or anything like that. I accepted it with enthusiasm. When it came to mission work, I thought: "There's where I need to help." If we do something about the sending of missionaries, and so on, it was my duty to do what I could do to help.

## Borntragers of Bloomfield, Montana

The Joseph Borntrager family moved to Bloomfield, Montana in the fall of 1905. Quoting from a paper by Chris Buller also from Bloomfield, Montana, "In the spring of 1905, the Rev. Joe Borntrager conducted services for the settlers, became interested in this country, filed a homestead claim, returned home, harvesting his crops, and began his procedure of leaving. The fall of 1905 his family arrived in Glendive, with their immigrant car. Rev. Borntrager and son Glen loaded some provisions and chickens. The cow trailed behind the wagon. After traveling some fifteen miles they lost track of destination. They landed in a sheep camp. The herder was unable to help them. Unhitching their horses they camped out on the prairie that night, with the sound of the coyote's howl." My brother Floyd remembers Father Glen telling of having said at one point in their travel to Thirteen Mile Valley after the bad lands and all, "Let's turn around and go back."

Joseph and his wife Barbara (Moyer) came from Fayette County, Illinois with six children: Miles, Ezra, Glen, Minnie, Perry, and Enos. The family settled on Joseph's homestead quarter-section five miles east of what is now Bloom-



field, immediately north of the Daniel Miller homestead. All of the Borntrager sons homesteaded somewhere in the area, but Glen was the only one that retained their original homestead and later purchased the Joseph homestead.

Preacher Joseph was an ordained minister serving in the Old Order Amish Church. He has an interesting history and background. He was ordained in the Forks Amish Mennonite Church. Here is a quote from his old German Bible written in German and translated to English: "Family History, Joseph J. Borntrager was born in the year of our Lord 1830, on Sept. 28 in Sommerset Co. Pennsylvania, was married on March 21, 1852 in La Grange Co. Indiana to Elizabeth, born Hershberger, who was born on Aug. 22, 1833, in Sommerset Co. in the state of Pennsylvania. He settled in La Grange County in the state of Indiana—was chosen from among six brethren by the Amish Mennonite Church as a preacher on June 2, 1867 in La Grange Co., Indiana, where he owned a nice farm." Joseph's wife, Elizabeth, passed away having no children and he married Barbara Moyer January 29, 1882.

This was at the time of the divisions that were taking place among the Amish Mennonite and the "Old Order Amish" in all of the Amish Mennonite areas. Apparently Joseph alone remained with the Amish Mennonite group and others in his family were Old Order Amish. However, Joseph left the Forks Mennonite Church and helped organize the Townline Conservative Mennonite Church in 1876.

Joseph and Barbara and son Miles moved to Lyon County, Kansas, near Hartford in about 1883 where all the other children were born. They apparently either started an Old Order Amish church in the community or joined with others who were living there. Joseph remained Old Order until his death. There were Amish Mennonite families in the same community at this time. In 1894-95 they left Kansas and moved to Midland, Virginia. In 1898 they moved to Brownstown, Illinois, then to Dawson Co., Montana, in 1905. The Joseph Moyer (Meyer) family, Barbara's parents, seemed to have moved with them to Kansas, Virginia, and to Illinois but not to Montana. We do know that Grand-

mother Moyer visited the Borntrager families in Montana but at this point we do not know if Grandfather Moyer ever was there or not. We do not know what happened to the Moyer family after Illinois. Grandfather Moyer and Grandfather Borntrager were about the same age.

Why did Grandfather Joseph move so often? Why did he move to Montana? Probably we will never know all that was involved. He lived in an unsettled and controversial time in the Amish Mennonite Church. The Midland, Virginia Amish had a short life and that is probably why they only lived there about four years. It is this writer's opinion that church life and concerns and his own spiritual pilgrimage were largely in back of the moves he made. My impressions are that he was a deeply spiritual man and a strong leader. He seemed to be identified by the Old Order Amish as liberal and no doubt by the Amish Mennonites as conservative. At the point of the beginning of the Mennonite church at Bloomfield, which now is the Red Top Mennonite Church, it seems he encouraged the Glen and Ezra families to unite with the General Conference Mennonite Church of Bloomfield rather than the Mennonite Church, being organized in the Amish community in 1917 which they did. Bishop I.S. Mast, who helped organize the congregation, was from the Dakota-Montana Mennonite Conference which was largely from Amish Mennonite background. Later the Glen family and all their children joined the Red Top Mennonite Church and are active or have been active in the church there. Elmer Borntrager was ordained as a minister in the church August 4, 1935 and served until September 1971 except for two years while attending Goshen College Bible School in Goshen, Indiana 1945-47. The Miles family moved to Indiana before the Mennonite church was started and none of the other sons and daughters ever became members of the Mennonite church of Bloomfield.

Glen, our father, married Cora Mae Chupp, daughter of Eli and Katie (Mullet) Chupp December 3, 1907. They had six children: Floyd, Elmer, Lillie, Lena, Mahlon, Esther, and Oscar. Father homesteaded the quarter-section immediately north of the Grandfather Joseph homestead. They lived in three different houses on this same quarter-section of land

on which they lived the rest of their married life. Father passed away April 14, 1968, and mother passed away September 25, 1982, after spending a few years in a retirement and a nursing home. Their first home was a small stone house on the "other side of the hill" from where they lived after those first few years. As I remember, this house couldn't have been more than about ten by sixteen feet in size. Later they built a frame house considerably larger and still later, in 1915, the present two-story house. Floyd, Mahlon and Lillie still live in the Bloomfield community. Floyd lives on the family farm. Floyd never married but the rest of the family married. Elmer and Lena live in Glendive, Montana. Esther lives near Kalispel, Montana and Oscar lives in Wewahatchka, Florida.

—By Elmer Borntrager in consultation with brother Floyd.

## Seventy-Five Years Ago

*The following presentations, written by Harvey A. Schnell, reflect the quickening influences in the church at the turn of the century.*

*Sunday schools were still not totally accepted as we may perceive in "An Apology for the Sunday School." We include these here so that we may keep in touch with the issues and themes of the Mennonite Church at the beginning of the twentieth century.*

### An Apology for the Sunday School

by Harvey A. Schnell

(Given at the seventh Holmes County Mennonite Sunday School Convention held at the Martincreek Church on September 19, 1908.)

I trust we are all one this morning in this, that we believe in the Sunday school.

The church is a medium of nourishment to believers. Through it is provided both the meat and the milk of the Gospel, to both old and young as needed. The Sunday school differs from the church, not in the truths presented, but in its method of presenting them, a method especially intended for children and youth.

Children are life and, at the same



time, very plastic of which fact the Sunday school aims to take advantage by presenting the truth to them through pictures and such things in which they are interested, so they can more easily understand and appreciate the truth. In the light of this fact we believe in the Sunday school.

Take the youth from ten to twenty years of age. During this period habits become permanent, making it highly important that they here be started right morally and socially. During this period they are liable to many temptations. During this period also they are likely to become either mischievous, unruly or self-centered and visionary. Their sore need at this point is something definite to do: work, mental as well as manual.

The Sunday school offers them work, not only for Sunday, but for every day. The activity of youth ought not be repressed, rather encouraged and directed.

Moreover, it is quite as right as it is natural for the youth to seek his way to some sort of self-expression. Teachers of youth ought never be satisfied till all are interested in the class discussions, and free to take a part in them. In view of these things, again, we believe in the Sunday school.

We all freely admit that the Sunday school by right is not an independent organization but a branch of the church.

And late research reveals to us that the Sabbath day school, something similar to our Sunday school, was had by the Jews as early as the day of Abraham and from there down to the time of our Savior, showing that Sunday school is ancient in fact, and modern only in form. In the light of these facts we believe the more in Sunday school, thinking it is needed today as much as at any time before.

In the church there is preaching; in the Sunday school, teaching. And when we remember that the Bible emphasizes teaching quite as much as it does preaching, we believe still the more in the Sunday school.

So this morning we first of all try to make an apology for the Sunday school, not to ask your pardon for holding to something that is wrong, but to plead for the full and free right-of-way of the Sunday school and for its universal approval, and this upon the sole grounds that the Sunday school merits it.

### "Don'ts" in Sunday School Work

by Harvey A. Schnell

(Given at the Ohio Mennonite Sunday School Conference, Canton, Ohio in August 1909.)

Don't be apologetic. Much apologizing means weakness.

Don't mistake rudeness for firmness; they are not related.

Don't engage unconverted persons as teachers.

Don't think your work all lies within the Sunday school hour; more lies in preparing for the hour; and more also dealing with individuals. It is easier for most of us to speak to an audience than to speak to a single individual, face to face, as we ought. Likewise a superintendent's work with individuals is more important than his audience work.

Don't teach above the scholars' heads. It is bad enough when your teaching is too high to reach the heart.

Don't fret or be noisy when the class becomes disorderly; calmness and silence are more effective in commanding order.

Don't allow the class discussions to drift upon lines that have no connection with the lesson.

Don't try to ask questions so that they may be understood; try to ask them so that they cannot be misunderstood.

On Sunday school work of any kind never go beyond the time to which you are limited; no one can be expected to do good when out of place.

Have all your work attended by inspiration to do it; inspiration is not supposed to help the lazy one, nor to take the place of hard work for any one.

"On doing personal work," says Trumbull, "never argue. If you really believe what you proclaim, that intense personal conviction of yours will have more power with men than any argument. Conviction convinces men and no method or amount of argument can take its place."

Don't shirk duty because you do not have the education or the intellectual attainments others have; highly useful as these are in the good work, our final test, however, will not be education or intellect, but rather in having done what we could helping others to the true light.

### The Role of Women

*The following poem was found among the papers of Charity Steiner (Hostettler), who copied it in a notebook with other poems on the role of women in the church and society at large. The poem was copied by Charity around 1910-1915, during her school days, and shows that the role of women in the church has been an issue many Mennonite women have given thought to throughout our history.*

—Bryan Kehr

#### "Let Your Women Keep Silence in the Churches"

by Mollie McGee Snell

'Twas prayer-meeting night. A few  
deacons were there,  
And one or two elders to help in the  
prayer.  
A sprinkling of men just dotted  
along,  
Hardly enough for a bass to the  
song.  
But like blossoms around with a smile  
on each face,  
The women were there humbly fill-  
ing their "place."  
The preacher was one of the most  
literal kind;  
For instance, he thought Saint Paul  
gave command,  
That in every age and in every land,  
The women a silence shall evermore  
hold  
When met in the church with the  
chosen sheepfold.

The prayer meeting opened with  
Thanksgiving song,  
The soprano of women rang the  
rythm [sic] along.  
While the young girl who pressed the  
organ's white keys  
Sent out a great tide of sweet  
melodies.  
The player and singers seemed to  
take a delight  
In helping the meeting with good  
music that night.  
I thought as I heard their voices glad  
ring,  
Surely the women have learned how  
to sing;  
Their silence 'tis certain they've  
forgot in their song,  
For beyond the church rafters their  
notes floated on!  
When the last chord had melted  
completely away,



The preacher requested an elder to pray.

After the prayer, he began, "I've no doubt  
You remember the subject I've given out.  
I want this prayer-meeting to evenly flow;  
Now what to the sinners in town do I owe?  
Let each *brother* speak, we must not forget,  
As a family here we now are all met.  
I ask every brother to give us a word;  
Come, let your voices be speedily heard.  
Take a minute, or five, or as long as you will,  
Only don't let any brother be still.  
Now I wait for a moment, Won't some brother speak?  
You have had this short theme for nearly a week."

A silence, alas! such as that you can feel,  
Followed this earnest, expectant appeal.  
Then the preacher, in a sort of dejected despair,  
Said, "Will Deacon Smith please lead us in prayer?"  
After this, to unloosen some brother's locked tongue,  
A hymn by the sisters was coaxingly sung.  
But the silence still lingered a dampening pall;  
From the brethren, the "sinners" got nothing at all.  
"I hate," said the preacher, "to single you out,  
But surely this subject needs talking, about.  
Brother Jones, can't you let us all know  
What to sinners you certainly owe?"

Brother Jones with "a hem" and "a haw" then arose,  
And solemnly started by blowing his nose.  
He told of a miner who in a hole fell  
And thought he was dropping straight down into hell.  
But only three feet, then he rose from the ground,  
But not a bone broken, safe, hearty and sound!  
After his talk Brother Jones then sat down,  
Without stating his debt to "the sinners in town."  
The preacher commended this im-

pressive tale  
And earnestly hoped it would never fail  
To teach its great lesson to one and all,  
There was much to consider in this miner's fall.  
Then he "singled" out this one and that one at will,  
But the "brethren" kept most lamentably still.  
They seemed not to grasp the theme for the night,  
And "the sinners in town" were left in their plight.  
I thought as I looked the audience o'er  
And counted the women beyond their threescore,  
What a tale of God's love could these women unfold!  
How soon could they warm this meeting so cold.

Their lives are the lights that shine in the town  
That keep many souls from fast going down.  
Their hands are the helpers to poverty's need.  
The brave loving sowers that scatter the seed;  
Their hearts are aglow with God's blessed Word,  
But because they are women they *must not be heard*.  
I thought of Deborah, and of Miriam fair,  
Of Huldah, of Anna, so gifted in prayer,  
Of the women who heeded the Gospel's great call,  
And faithfully labored by the side of Saint Paul.  
I thanked God for Joel, the prophet of old,  
Who before the Messiah had truthfully told  
How afterward God would teach from on high  
The sons and his *daughters* to both prophesy.  
I thought of the dawn of that glorious day  
When Jesus to Mary did lovingly say:  
"Go tell my disciples!" How precious the thought,  
Resurrection's glad story by women was brought.

The prayer-meeting was over. The people went home.  
But who was made better because they had come?

## Recent Publications

Hoffman, Wanda Kauffman. *Ancestors and Descendants of Joseph D. Kaufman (1858-1922)*. Goshen, Indiana, 1983. Pp. 116. \$10.00. Order from author, 17259 Institutional Drive, Goshen, IN 46526.

Johnson, DeLilah D., Compiler. *The History and Records of the Benjamin Deckert Families, 1534-1982*. Marion, South Dakota, 1983. Pp. 152. \$10.98.

Linder, Eva, Compiler. *Joseph Conrad Genealogy (1821-1984)*. Alliance, Ohio, 1984. Pp. 73. \$4.00. Order from compiler, 10650 Beech St., Alliance, OH 44601.

McGrath, William R. *Contentment: The Life and Times of Jacob Hertzler, Pioneer Amish Bishop, 1703-1786*. 1984. Pp. 176. \$6.00. Order from author, 8107 Magnet Rd., Minerva, OH 44657.

Page, Doris L. and Marie Johns. *The Amish Mennonite Settlement in Butler County, Ohio*. Trenton, Ohio, 1983. Pp. 51. \$4.95. Order from Doris L. Page, Trenton Historical Society, 310 Hamilton Ave., Trenton, OH 45067.

Yothers, Richard J., Jr, Compiler. *Descendants of Jacob Yothers, Buck County, Pennsylvania*. Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 1984. Pp. 210. \$22.00.

## Book Review

*Land, Piety and Peoplehood, The Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America, 1683-1790*. By Richard K. MacMaster. Scottsdale, Pennsylvania and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1985. Pp. 336. Paperback. \$12.00 (Canada, \$15.60).

This is the first volume in the long-awaited Mennonite Experience in America series. Three additional volumes are in preparation. Unlike so many of the previously published volumes of American Mennonite history, this series aims to treat the group's interaction with the larger historical scene, offering thereby both an inner and an outer account of the major facets of American Mennonite development. This is not a denominational history with a focus on



its structures and institutions so much as a history of a people in all its rich variety. As this series progresses, the volumes will include all of the various branches of the Anabaptist-Mennonite family that are found or that originated in the New World.

As the subtitle indicates, this volume covers the beginnings of Mennonitism in America through the American revolutionary times. The first chapter however, entitled "Aliens in Ferment," begins with a description of the rise and rapid spread of Anabaptism in Europe. This involved the evolution of a very different understanding of the church and the Christian life than was commonly held through the Middle Ages. This difference was often alleged to be a rejection of infant baptism when in fact that was but a detail arising out of a radically different view of the church and of the believer's faith and practice. This new conception of the Christian faith has been called "a third way" which is neither Catholic nor Protestant, yet there are to be found along the way instances of incongruity as many view it now, such as the espousal of pacifism combined with a willingness to pay substantial taxes that were used for military purposes. This book enables us to be cognizant of the changing social and civil contexts in which Anabaptism was being expressed in Europe, some taking a more lenient view toward their sympathizers (but not members) while others felt their situation demanded a more rigorous discipline of separation. There were times when the civil authority responded with a strange combination of tolerance and restrictions such as that of Prince Karl Ludwig in the Palatinate in the 1650s.

Of particular interest to this reviewer was the attention given to the Mennonites in America prior to the 1683 settlement in Germantown. What little information is known of the scattered Mennonites is given here as a link between the European scene and the establishment of the first permanent colony in Germantown.

Chapter Two, entitled "Immigration: Motives and Mutual Aid," surveys the patterns and examines them. Chapter Three, "The Land Base of Community," notes, for example, that a frequent pattern in colonial Mennonitism was that economic competency and church

leadership went hand-in-hand. Chapter Four then treats "Land and Community on the Frontiers." Chapter Five, "Like Fish in Water," challenges those writers who characterize the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as being a period of increasing social isolation. MacMaster here also speaks of the Mennonite belief that the proper mode of baptism was by sprinkling or pouring, yet I suspect that any evidence is lacking that sprinkling was ever taught or practiced. The author seems clearly mistaken when he raises the question as to whether Christopher Dock taught in the Skipack Meetinghouse or in a separate structure when the evidence is clear that the school was being held already in 1718, whereas a meetinghouse was not built until 1725; and again when he says that Dock's treatise on school-management was not published until after his death in 1770 when in fact Dock died in 1771 and the treatise had been published the year before.

The author then turns to a chapter on "The Inner Religious Life: Mennonites and Pietism" and makes the intriguing observation that alms books were much more important to Mennonites than were baptismal, marriage and funeral registers. He proceeds to take issue with Robert Friedmann's harsh criticism of Pietism's influence when he says, "it is practically impossible to say clearly what came as the influence of the Pietistic movement, and what was simply a gradual change in the Amish, and Mennonite people's own piety."

In addressing "Meetinghouse and Congregational Life" I had to wonder why the author bypassed the data for the earlier southwestern Pennsylvania area and turned so quickly in this chapter to Lancaster County. In the course of his discussion however, he does provide much grist for thought whether in citing the Mennonite meetinghouse owned by a Catholic priest in Hereford Township or in observing that the Mennonites could easily use the same building for school and worship since the building in Mennonite thought is utilitarian and not a sacred symbol or monument. He also gives the illustration of a Mennonite pastor who was asked to conduct the funeral of a noted reformed church minister as well as summarizing the wedding practices of colonial times. Some of the reasoning and analyses in this

chapter (Seven) I found inadequate or difficult to follow. I would think that the reason Mennonite leaders made some of their decisions outside the context of the meetinghouse may have been for another and more profound reason than simply that they identified with other Mennonite congregations in a wider area; namely that they appropriately kept separate their community and churchly roles unlike the state-church oriented clergy. And when he mitigates an earlier point that financial success and spiritual leadership generally went hand-in-hand by interpreting Martin Boehm's disclaimer upon being made a minister by lot as a reference to his economic poverty, MacMaster most likely overlooked the deepseated tendency to speak of oneself in such a manner as an expression of spiritual unworthiness rather than as having any reference whatever to his financial status.

In light of the current widespread charismatic movement which exhibits instances of "slaying in the Spirit," it is fascinating to read in Chapter Eight of Martin Boehm's encounter with this religious phenomenon in the early 1780s. We can infer also that the church today has suffered substantial inroads of individualism when we learn that in the late 1700s Mennonites believed that being members one of another meant that no one would marry or change his dwelling or buy land without seeking the counsel of his fellow-believers. In the closing several chapters, the reader will feel a distinct discomfort as the author places our current practices under the searchlight of our historic convictions.

This is unquestionably a seminal book and we look forward to the volumes yet to come for further penetrating analyses and comparison of the way we have taken, in more recent decades. One can only hope that none of the trenchancy of this series will be lost by a self-imposed limitation upon the length of the volumes. And where readers differ with these authors at times, as I have here, this hopefully will only encourage us to reflect the more vigorously and perceptively with the data here provided. This volume is commendably equipped with footnotes, a bibliographical essay (though this reviewer would always like a bibliographical listing as well) and an index.

—Gerald C. Studer



# Mennonite Historical Bulletin

Vol. XLVI

July, 1985

ISSN 0025-9357

No. 3

## Church-Wide Meetings

by Tilman Smith

*I have attended many conferences and church-wide meetings in my day but I will record my impressions of only a few. These meetings have always been significant because of their historical, cultural and sociological implications as well as their theological connotations.*

*These early meetings were always hosted by a local rural congregation or congregations. General conferences were attended by five thousand or more persons from all over the church. To feed, house, transport and take care of the personal needs of such large numbers took ingenious planning. We have never given proper credit to those who so faithfully worked "behind the scenes," particularly the women, so that men could have a platform and an audience to make their pronouncements.*

*Church-wide meetings helped break*

*down geographical and cultural barriers. These conferences also taught tolerance, patience and even restraint in some instances. Personally I could never understand how ordained persons from the Franconia and Lancaster conferences in Pennsylvania, conferences which never were official members of General Conference, could be official delegates. Probably I have been personally somewhat biased because for many years the Illinois Conference of which I was a member was a "thorn in the flesh" to some elements of General Conference and was regularly under surveillance as to whether or not it should be excluded from the body, or at least shunned. The issue was finally resolved when some "bright young men" nearly forty years ago, through research found that in its original mandate, General Conference was not legislative, but*

*an advisory body only, and had no authority to place the ban on the Illinois Conference.*

I can recall a few details from my first church-wide meeting, the 1906 Western District Amish Mennonite Conference (WDAMC) held at our home congregation between Roanoke and Eureka, Illinois. In that year, Mennonite Church membership was 27,046. The WDAMC met annually from 1890 to 1920 when it merged with various "Old" Mennonite district conferences. The WDAMC consisted of all the Amish-Mennonite churches from Illinois west. Most of the Mennonites in Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska were Amish-Mennonite in background. Other Amish-Menno-



Mennonite General Conference, 1927 (Belleville, Pennsylvania). *The Lewistown Gazette*, September 1, 1927, devoted its entire front page to the General Conference at Belleville. Headlines and commentary include: "5500 Persons Enrolled"; "4500 Persons Fed Three Times a Day"; "Microphonic System Enables Entire Audience to Hear." The resolutions committee of three, it was noted, included a woman, Mrs. Thomas E. Zook. (Conference photographs were taken by Moses Yoder, native of Belleville, Pennsylvania, who later worked as a master craftsman at Goshen College for many years.)





John Horsch (left), early Mennonite historian, talking to Orie Miller. The background building to the left is the first aid station.

nite churches in the Western District were in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Colorado, Oregon and Oklahoma, one or two congregations in each state. The Eastern District Amish-Mennonite Conference included the area from Indiana east.

I was not quite four at the time of the 1906 conference. These were truly the horse and buggy days, but that didn't keep delegates and visitors from attending church-wide meetings. Nearly all the congregations were represented, including those in Oregon. There was an excellent network of railroads at that time, covering nearly every small town with passenger train service. At the 1906 conference, visitors were met by local members at Roanoke, Eureka, Metamora, and other nearby small towns. I can't recall any of the religious pronouncements; I do remember the "huge" crowds and of course the unusual local arrangements, particularly the meals. Many came by horse and buggy from neighboring congregations and the feeding and watering of horses was

also of special interest.

Some years later, in 1916, as an early teenager, I also accompanied my father and two uncles to the Missouri-Iowa Mennonite District Conference which met near Palmyra, in eastern Missouri. My father served as one of the song leaders. We drove our new 1914 Buick C37 automobile. There were no detailed road maps or any road markings such as the green and orange bands painted around telephone poles marking the Caterpillar Trail, or the red, white, and blue bands marking the Lincoln Highway, which came later. There were no hard-surfaced roads but a few were more carefully graded and annually covered with road oil which shed the rains. We did have a guide book which gave directions from one town to another with such information: "Go one mile south, two west, turn left at the elevator" and so on. We arrived safely and got acquainted with and fellowshiped with a different geographical group. Hospitality was excellent but facilities were limited. There were few Mennonite homes and each entertained from ten to twenty visitors overnight. Few slept on regular beds with mattresses. Most slept eight or ten to a room on straw covered with blankets nailed to the floor with slats at either end. It was understood that these brothers and sisters were doing everything they could and their efforts were appreciated.

On our return from the Iowa-Missouri Conference we left early in the morning to cover the 175 miles back to Eureka, Illinois, before extreme darkness came upon us. We stopped for breakfast in a thriving rural town. As simple rural people, we all had heard of Porterhouse steaks but we knew little about their proportions or their appropriateness for a light breakfast. At Uncle Joe's suggestion we ordered Porterhouse steaks and eggs. We weren't quite sure why the cooks stared at us through the kitchen window when they received the order. When the

ample servings were brought to our tables, we caught on. After satisfying both our hunger and our curiosity we proceeded home and didn't need any more food until noon.

From the Mennonite General Conference sessions listed in the *Mennonite Yearbook* from 1898 to the present, I can remember having met personally or having heard speak, every moderator and every conference sermon speaker but one.

Many of these persons visited first in my boyhood home, and later, in our own home. My parents were ardent church workers—my father as Sunday school superintendent and chorister and my mother as a Sunday school teacher and organizer, and teacher for neighborhood children who on Saturday afternoons during the summer months met to learn Bible stories, Bible verses and religious songs. My parents had a high view of the church; I don't remember any open criticism they expressed, although I know they worked for many changes in practice. Through them I learned to appreciate the Mennonite Church and enjoy and participate in all kinds of church meetings, including world conferences, even to the present time.

A few other earlier church-wide meetings were significant to me. The first General Conference I attended was held at Waterloo, Ontario, in 1923. This, too, was my first international experience. The moderator was J.A. Ressler, a pioneer missionary in India, and later editor of *Words of Cheer*, a children's paper. "Uncle J.A." and his wife, "Aunt Lina," were household words to Mennonite children because they published children's letters with their own appropriate responses. The conference sermon was preached by D.A. Yoder of Wakarusa, Indiana. D.A. Yoder was born in 1883, ordained a minister in 1907, and bishop in 1910. He died recently at 97 years. J.C. Wenger who spoke at his funeral service stated that Brother Yoder had served longer in the ministry than any other Mennonite in history. To

The *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* is published quarterly by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church and distributed to the members of the Mennonite Historical Association. **Editor:** Leonard Gross; **Assistant Editor:** Rachel Shenk; **Book Review Editor:** Gerald C. Studer; **Office Editor:** Bryan Kehr; **Production and Design:** Julia Lind; **Associate Editors:** Rafael Falcon, Jan Gleysteen, Merle Good, Amos B. Hoover, Albert N. Keim, James Mininger, Winifred Paul, Lorraine Roth, Shirley Showalter, Wilmer Swope, and J. C. Wenger. Dues for regular membership (\$5), contributing membership (\$10-25), supporting membership (\$50), sustaining membership (\$100-250), and sponsoring membership (\$500 and above) per year may be sent to the editor. (Library rate: \$5 per year.) Articles and news items should be addressed to the editor, 1700 S. Main Street, Goshen, Indiana 46526 (Tel. 219/533-3161, Ext. 477).

Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts*. Microfilms of Volumes I-XLIV of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* are available from: University Microfilms, Inc., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.



me at that time in my life, the general tone of the Conference seemed to be moderate and outwardly peaceful. However, upon a careful reading of the official minutes recently, I recognize that I was not aware of some of the more subtle implications of what was said and done.

The 1925 General Conference was held at Eureka, Illinois, my home community, on the grounds of the Mennonite Home for the Aged, now called Maple Lawn Homes. Simon Gingerich of Wayland, Iowa, was moderator and Noah Mack of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, preached the conference sermon. The tone of this meeting was different from that of 1923. There was something disturbing in the air! Mennonite higher education was openly on trial. Noah Mack held out faint hope for the future of our colleges, particularly Goshen College. He was somewhat generous, however, in stating that he was willing to give higher education in the Mennonite Church one more chance to prove itself. (I too took one more chance and enrolled at Goshen College the next month.)

The statement by Bishop Mack I recorded from memory. After sixty years, memory can play tricks. Currently, April 1985, I found the official report of Mennonite General Conference held at the Mennonite Home for the Aged, Eureka, Illinois, August 26-28, 1925. The exact quote on pages 25-26 is:

"... We have a school question which is a most stupendous one. I am one of those who long could not be convinced that it was good for a church of simple faith to have a college. You ask, 'Are you convinced now?' Not altogether. But I have yielded over and said to the Lord, 'Thy will be done'; and I am helping in my limited way to test it out. Do you not think I have a fair heart and mind, willing to test it out? You say, 'God used learned men at all times like Moses, Daniel and Paul.' Oh, yes, I see, but it would not pay you men to have three colleges to educate one man in a thousand years. One great difficulty of educating them by hundreds and thousands—it is difficult to find the leaders that God has selected.

"... Whatever I say today comes from a warm heart, though it is buried in a rugged bark. I wish none of you would shut your eyes against

the truth because of personal prejudice. I am but a little ram's horn to blow today the message of God. . . ."

I also remember a rather strong confrontation from the platform. T.K. Hershey, a missionary from Argentina, spoke on the question of church discipline and some implications from his missionary experience. He was willing to concede that not every conservative facet thought to be appropriate by some North American Mennonites was enforced *per se* in the Argentine churches. He did suggest that some judicious pruning of the vine was part of their husbandry in dealing with their members. His moderate position was frankly attacked by George R. Brunk I who stated that pruning wasn't enough; there had to be some "dehorning," a barn yard concept dealing with clipping or sawing the horns from cattle. I was somewhat shocked by this frank confrontation. There was a good deal of uneasiness on the part of many.

Here are Brunk's own words, as they appear in the 1925 Mennonite General Conference Report, pages 35-36: "... When I came to Virginia, I had nice [fruit] trees . . . loaded with apples, and they turned a beautiful red and I felt very happy over the prospect of fruit in Virginia;

but I was ignorant of the real conditions. I was enjoying myself in the prospects of a fruitful harvest. It reminds me of many ministers who are not conscious of the danger threatening our young people. Not long after the apples were full-size and red they began to turn black with rot and fell to the ground. I did not know what was wrong, I needed somebody to tell me and I called in a neighbor who was an expert. It was a fine looking tree. He took his thumb nail and ran it up along the branches which were absolutely coated with San Jose scale.

"I said, 'What is that?'

" 'That is something that will kill your tree if you do not control it. . . . It must be sprayed with lime sulphur.' . . .

"... I am not giving a lecture on horticulture, but giving an illustration of dealing with externals in order to save our apple orchards. I got severe. I am naturally severe. The scale covered the tree from the ground to the tips of the twigs. I dehorned the thing. I thought I must leave a few small clean branches so it could breathe, but I cut it away terribly—and I did not spray it with lime sulphur, but I washed it, and the tree came out and grew admirably the rest of the year. In four years, it



**Mennonite General Conference, 1939 (Allensville, Pennsylvania).** Feeding five thousand persons in a completely rural setting was in no sense a miracle but it was an ingenious feat. The steam engine shown in the background was standard equipment for large Mennonite conferences. It supplied steam and hot water for making coffee, boiling frankfurters, cooking oatmeal and germ, and washing dishes.



was bigger than the one that stood beside it that was not dehorned, and it bloomed beautifully because of controlling the enemies of tree life and fruit."

It was customary in those early days to have a half-dozen delegates, always ordained men, to give their testimony. The testimonials to Bishop Mack's conference sermon were given by Andrew Shank, Oronogo, Missouri; J.P. Bontrager, Los Angeles, California; George R. Brunk, Denbigh, Virginia; J.N. Kaufman, India; T.K. Hershey, South America; and Wesley Witmer, Petersburg, Ontario.

I have always been intrigued to note how diverse witnesses could so adroitly select points on which they could confirm the sermon, regardless of what they may have really believed about the sum and substance of what was said. One middle-aged man stated in characteristic humility: "Brethren and sisters, I was wondering this morning why a little lad like me should be called upon to come to the platform to say something." He almost didn't!

Half of the witnesses had attended either Elkhart Institute or Goshen College and probably did not fully agree with the unfavorable reference in the conference sermon which dealt with our church schools. Yet, they did not make any remarks which would have exposed their innermost thoughts.

The annual meeting of the Mennonite Board of Missions in 1947 was held at Mackinaw Dells near Congerville, Illinois, and sponsored by Central Illinois Mennonite churches. Two things impressed me: Out of this meeting came the Mennonite Youth Fellowship, spearheaded by Paul Erb, then editor of the *Gospel Herald*. The MYF movement proved that the Mennonite Church trusted young people to carry out a program largely under their own direction. This vote of confidence by an official body of the church was greatly appreciated and strengthened the relationships between the younger segment of the church and the older. That meeting was probably a turning point in this regard. It seems to me that after 1947 our Mennonite young people felt more ownership in the church.

I also learned what a huge task it was to sponsor large church-wide meetings in a rural setting. I was asked to serve as chairman of the local

arrangements committee of the 1947 MBM meeting, to provide transportation, housing, ushering, parking, feeding, restrooms, information services, arranging meeting rooms and other such things. I recall with pleasure how marvelously well brothers and sisters in the congregations responded to their various tasks with great dedication and creativity.

To this day we have not fully tested the various resources in our congregations to determine exactly how and where these strengths can best be brought to bear in building the kingdom.

## Conversations with Elizabeth Bender

### II

*In the January 1985 MHB we began a series of reflections on Mennonite life and thought, beginning with the "John F. Funk Era," as remembered by Elizabeth Bender. The April issue continued the theme of the Funk Era, reflecting the memory of Anna Hoover Bollman.*

*We now want to move on to the first half of the twentieth century, what is sometimes called the Daniel Kauffman Era in view of the new Daniel Kauffman imprint that so suddenly and so obviously appeared on the Mennonite political and theological horizon.*

*We choose to call this era "The Doctrinal Interlude," an era about which Elizabeth Bender and Leonard Gross exchange views in the dialogue below.*

—Leonard Gross

## Daniel Kauffman and the Doctrinal Interlude

**Leonard Gross:** You have read a draft of my developing thesis on the Mennonite Church in the twentieth century. I think the most important question I can ask you has to do with the following paragraph from this thesis: "The approach of John S. Coffman where faith and history were of one piece, and the traditional vision of M.S. Steiner couched as it was in a warm traditional Mennonite piety, were gone with their untimely deaths in 1899 and 1911 respectively. John F. Funk's role was effectively halted in 1908 with the end of the

*Herald of Truth* along with a traditional view that because God continues to work within history, Christianity by definition is the amalgamation of faith and history."

Now, I see that as what had been in the Funk era (1864-1898 [-1908]), and I see that as being what is in the Harold S. Bender era (1944ff).

**Elizabeth Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** Mennonitism, however, with Daniel Kauffman, turned virtually ahistorical.

**Bender:** Yes. That's certainly true. Yes. I would have nothing to criticize about that. Daniel Kauffman was exceedingly ahistorical. He did not care what had happened in the past; we have to live the doctrine now. Having heard him preach frequently, I can say that what he believed was nearly always based on what he thought was Bible doctrine. And many times, we would now say—practically all of us—that it was just human tradition: holdovers of tradition and rationalization. Daniel Kauffman rationalized. He had to say about our plain clothing that that's a biblical doctrine, but to say this takes a little rationalization. Certain aspects were mentioned in the Bible, but not uniformity in dress or anything like that. There's not doctrine on uniform clothing. Certainly not.

For instance, J.B. Smith belonged to the Daniel Kauffman doctrinal school. I asked him, once, where we find a doctrine in the Bible about women wearing a bonnet. And he said, "Why, yes, in the Old Testament; God says, 'I will take away your bonnets' [Isaiah 3:18-20]." He made a doctrine out of something that was pure rationalization. He might not have called it a doctrine, but in practice it certainly was a church doctrine. At the Mennonite General Conference held at Goshen in 1917 they passed a resolution that women should wear a bonnet that ties consistently under the chin. They find a reason for what they want to believe. And they had to go to the Old Testament to find something on bonnets.

**Gross:** Say more about Daniel Kauffman's being ahistorical.

**Bender:** Ahistorical means he doesn't base his doctrine on what the Mennonites believed in the sixteenth century and on down. I think that is true, except that he did believe in preserving tradition, and then he





Daniel and Mary (Shank) Kauffman, 1933.

called the tradition "doctrine."

**Gross:** I could hear someone say, well, he wrote history, so how could he be ahistorical?

**Bender:** He knew a few of the facts of history, yes, but he didn't base his faith on historical facts. I don't think he would have cared how people in the interim of 400 years lived as far as religious practices are concerned. That wouldn't have mattered very much. Of course, if you had asked him point-blank, are you interested in history, well, what else could he say but yes. But it didn't seem to affect his thinking.

**Gross:** Let me push this one step further. I like the phrase, Christianity as faith and history, which means that God has entered human history. History is basically human.

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** The interactions of human beings.

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** God steps into that, and some humans respond, and the church is the strongest response to God's having stepped into history.

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** Now here the New Testament books are unique, basically because they were written close to the time that Jesus lived, and are our only recourse to Jesus of Nazareth.

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** And the Old Testament is unique because it's our only recourse to God's working during those centuries, among the people of Israel, before the time of Christ.

**Bender:** Yes, you're right, I would agree.

**Gross:** But God continues to work.

**Bender:** Yes, and even in the people who don't accept Him. They can also be used as tools.

**Gross:** Now, it's this element that somehow is missing in the doctrinal era of Daniel Kauffman, it seems to me.

**Bender:** Let me think a little bit. Yes, I think that's true. I don't think I ever heard Dan Kauffman say anything about God working in history.

**Gross:** You had heard him quite a few times?

**Bender:** Oh, yes, yes. He lived in Scottdale, and I was there from the time I was thirteen until I was twenty.

**Gross:** So from 1909 to 1915, you heard Daniel Kauffman almost every Sunday?

**Bender:** Well, at least half of the time. Aaron Loucks was a preacher there too, and J.A. Brilhart.

**Gross:** That is significant that you don't remember Daniel Kauffman talking about God's working in history.

**Bender:** No, he never had a broad approach which would include anything relating to any philosophical idea. I don't remember anything in Dan Kauffman's editorials or in his sermons on that kind of a subject. There was a lot on ethics from a Mennonite point of view; he was always preaching on tangible things—although Kauffman never made any references to, nor did he believe in fiction.

**Gross:** Now, the *Martyrs Mirror*, it seems to me, is based on the idea of Christianity as faith and history. God continues to work in history in the lives that make up his scattered church and I was going to say that that idea and that approach to Christianity is one that needs the intellectual.

**Bender:** Maybe so. Yes, I hadn't thought of that. Now Kauffman would have the intellect. I think that he was, what we would say, not an intellectual, but intelligent. He really was intelligent. But he voluntarily, and I suppose that is partly due to his growing-up environment, rejected the intellectual.

**Gross:** Say a little more about education, Daniel Kauffman aside for a moment; would it be true that a historical-philosophical approach, loosely understood, was to be found within early Anabaptism?

**Bender:** It would be true, at least,

for the Anabaptist leaders; and that was true in the very beginning. The leaders were men of education, with philosophical training. This, however, was not true of the rank and file. The rank and file were common people, farmers and laborers and so on, as far as I know anyway. But there were always, nearly always, at least, some leaders with this frame of reference. And, in my general overview of Mennonite history, in eras where there was no strong leadership, there was more of a tendency toward legalism and formalism. But the leadership was nearly always able to pull them up spiritually and awaken them.

**Gross:** Now this must have happened with John S. Coffman.

**Bender:** Yes.

**Gross:** And with M.S. Steiner, and it seems to me it must have happened with John Funk earlier, from 1864 to 1890. It seems to me that after 1890, something happened to the church that brought a downward turn, spiritually.

**Bender:** I had never thought about that. Now I don't know what I would say, but it seems to me that the spiritual level, as I remember my youth in the Mennonite Church, was quite low. Well, that's pretty soon after the year 1890 that you talk about, and 1910 and so on.

**Gross:** You mentioned that there were a lot of thou-shalt-nots back there, and that it was a rural mentality and an anti-education mentality.

**Bender:** Yes, that's right. What do people need an education for?

**Gross:** So how did that earlier legalism differ from the Doctrine of Daniel Kauffman?

**Bender:** Daniel Kauffman's Doctrine was an improvement over some of the earlier formalism. I've never analyzed it before, but that legalism is more in the area of folk traditions—like in other churches, where nobody but a preacher can get behind a pulpit, especially those that have the pulpit off in a little cubicle—and things of that sort. Now Dan Kauffman made that more consistent. He would not have objected to a preacher representing those types of folksy traditions; he ignored this. But what he thought were the true Mennonite traditions, like dress, he upheld and fostered and promoted.

Yet Daniel Kauffman wasn't all thou-shalt-nots. He also knew something of the power of right living.



Missions started during his era—in our branch a little later than among the General Conference Mennonites, I guess—including foreign missions. It was a great era, in its own way.

**Gross:** I agree. And Doctrine played a crucial role in some of these positive developments.

Let us try to see some cause-effect relationships in all of this: Now John Funk was a bright light on the horizon, but wasn't able to push through as a leader very far into the twentieth century. And John S. Coffman was a bright light as an evangelist, in education, in missions, and even in publication work. But he died in 1899. The central idea that both of these two leaders stood for—let us say, Christianity as faith and history—was in large part displaced after the turn of the century by Doctrine. Was the birth of Mennonite General Conference in 1898 a major reason why Doctrine could so readily replace Christianity as faith and history, bringing about a certain discontinuity with the past?

**Bender:** I'm sure that would have something to do with it, yes. The congregations were more autonomous.

**Gross:** There were (district) conferences.

**Bender:** Yes, but none of them were very pronounced, as I remember, except Lancaster and Franconia. Those were pronounced. Wayne County, Ohio, we heard a lot about and still Orrville was different from Oak Grove. They also had a spiritual minded I.W. Royer who was, I think, a very, very good preacher and did not harp and harp and dwell on those externals. I always liked him here at the College. When he used to come and preach here, I was glad.

**Gross:** How about the 1864 birth of a Mennonite journal, the *Herald of Truth*? Was it in a sense a unifying factor for the church?

**Bender:** It must have been, yes.

**Gross:** But not like Mennonite General Conference.

**Bender:** No. No, because it had no authority, and General Conference took authority on itself. Franconia, Lancaster, Washington-Franklin, and Western Ontario conferences never joined. Virginia did not join until later. And it was Harold Bender who in the '40s or so told Mennonite General Conference, when they were considering excluding the Illinois

Conference, that the Mennonite General Conference doesn't have that power.

**Gross:** Let me ask something else: Part of my thesis is that the Mennonite Church as we know it today was born in 1864, when the *Herald of Truth* came into being. It's this phrase, reportedly from Gandhi, "You cannot unite a people without a journal."

**Bender:** Yes, that's a pertinent quote.

**Gross:** Would you say that there is some truth in that? That the modern Mennonite Church begins in 1864?

**Bender:** Yes, that's right. It doesn't mean that there is a clear-cut break. Because there were some pamphlets and books written, Benjamin Eby's *Kurzgefasste Kirchen-Geschichte und Glaubenslehre*, for example, written in 1841. Even so, a new life came in with the Funk era, I'm sure of that. There were some people blossoming before 1900, but at that time the spiritual kind of leader often left the church; they founded the United Brethren and who knows what else.

**Gross:** It seems to me that there is in every generation something that needs testing: What type of education obtained in any given generation? Perhaps that is a clue to the type of piety, and maybe even to spiritual renewal—one of the clues, not the only one, certainly. So those are some of the major things that I wanted to test with you. My thesis is that the Funk era went from 1864 to 1898. In 1898, with the birth of Mennonite General Conference and the publication of *Bible Doctrines*, we have the Kauffman era, and that continues to 1944. The Bender era begins in 1924, and comes into its own in 1944, and I feel we still live in the Bender era today, defined by the Anabaptist Vision as the catalyst.

**Bender:** Yes, I agree.

*This segment, "Daniel Kauffman and the Doctrinal Interlude," is second in a series of five "conversations" with Elizabeth Bender. In a forthcoming segment, "Mennonite Leadership: Holding the Church Together," Daniel Kauffman is evaluated from the standpoint of the larger Mennonite historical context, along with other church leaders within the past century or so of our life together as a people.*

—Leonard Gross

## Reminiscence

by Abraham J. Stoll

Reminiscing on the early days of our Conference and the beginning of our Mennonite Church near Wolford, I find the years of the Dakota-Montana Conference run quite parallel to that of my years. I was near ten years old when the church started at Wolford. The church near Surrey was probably the first one organized although the church building at Kenmare was the first one built in the district.

One of life's mysteries is how long it took me to grow from boyhood to an adult and then how soon I got from adulthood to today. The Apostle Paul must have had similar thoughts when he wrote, "being such a one as Paul, the aged . . ." Phil. 9.

Thinking back on many incidents and happenings as I remember them as a boy, many of them have little historical value. But I am happy to have grown up in such a time as this. My first knowledge of the Mennonites came about when Dad said one day, "This week we are going to hear a Mennonite preacher." The evening came when we hitched the team to the double buggy and drove eight miles to the Noah Bacher farm where in the driveway of the grainery a large crowd of people were listening to the preacher speaking loud and clear so all could hear. I could not get to see the speaker and did not see him that evening but his message impressed me so that I asked my family many questions about him and his sermon. Sometime after this service, this man came again and had revival services in a little school house at Island Lake. Brother I.S. Mast organized a Sunday school and named two men as superintendents. If I recall these right, they were Menno Graber and Elmer (Pete) Helmuth. This was a marvelous new beginning. The enthusiasm was unequalled and many made real commitments to be used in this venture.

Brother Mast made regular visits to this group. How well I remember the meetings in the Island Lake school, how the Holy Spirit's conviction was brought to our hearts as he preached. I recall in this packed crowd I would slide down behind a seat and hidden there, the tears rolled



down my face as I listened to the message of salvation. I was just a boy and was not expected to make any commitments. Brother Mast was the man of the hour, and the Holy Spirit used him in a mighty way to make Christ known. I can still hear his voice and see him on his knees with arms upraised in prayer as he pled with God for souls to be saved.

As a result of those meetings I remember a group of young men going forward to be baptized, among them was my brother, Bill, Fanny's brother, Tom Yoder, Abe Kauffman, and others.

Brother Mast was largely responsible for starting the congregations in our district. I marvel today at the dedication and commitment of this man. Many times it was hard for him to have enough money to buy a ticket for train fare to where he was to have a church service. One time he had no money and no ticket for train fare, but he went to the depot to wait for the train. While there he got into conversation with a bartender. As the time came to leave the bartender found out Brother Mast's predicament and paid his fare. This man got to be a close friend of Mast.

I am grateful for the spiritual training I got in our new church. I learned to study the Bible. I memorized scripture, hymns, books of the Bible. We were taught diligently in doctrinal studies. Seldom did we go to Sunday school without having memorized a new Bible verse.

In those early years I learned the value and power of prayer. One day in my play I needed a hammer, and going to the shop I found Dad's tool chest locked—today I know why! In my need the thought came to me, "Ask God for a hammer." After praying, I looked up to see a most beautiful butterfly flying past the door, and forgetting the hammer I chased this butterfly. It was just above my head. Thinking if I had a stick I could reach it and looking about I saw a stick protruding from a pile of dirt. By pulling it out, I found it was a good hammer that the carpenter had lost. This was a beginning on my part of God becoming very real to me and His answers have lasted me a lifetime. I could relate to you an incident very much the same to a 77-year-plus old man. God hears regardless of age.

Coming back to those days of beginnings. We were taught church

discipline and how to live Christian lives. These teachings came to me from my Sunday school teachers, ministers, winter Bible schools, and regular revival meetings. I think of men of faith who helped me build my faith and life, such as L.C. Kauffman, Danny Kauffman, L.A. Kauffman, Joe Lehman, C.G. Ringler, J.C. Gingerich, E.G. Hochstetler, Sol Zook, Levi Glick and many others.

Discipline was quite rigid, and at times, I felt was severe. I remember my brother was asked to make a confession for going to a Christmas program in town. Others I could mention. Regulation clothes were a must and used as a mark of degree of church loyalty.

Mission work was also in its early beginnings and the vision was not as great as it is today. Revival meetings did not reach far beyond our circles but were more for revival purposes than for evangelism. Foreign missions had its beginning in India, and Argentina mission started about this time.

Our church, as with others in the district, was an alive, growing church. Nearly everyone became useful in some way, and all took a part. I recall our minister would often ask someone in the congregation to lead in prayer. One time a man named Pete could not respond and this disturbed him so that he cried through the service. Later he told the

minister to ask him again and he would be prepared, and at another service Pete responded. Pete, in his high pitched voice, began: "Unser Fater."

Another service I remember very distinctly was our once-a-month song service. We did not have special numbers, but anyone who gave a number was expected to lead it, and there never was a shortage of hymns to be sung. At one time Pete (another Pete) Yoder wanted to have his number given but always someone got ahead of him. Finally as a song was being finished Pete called out in a loud voice, "Three-Ought-Six, We'll Work 'Till Jesus Comes—O Lord of rest for Thee I sigh, when will the moment come?"

In these song services we never lacked song leaders. Mollie Yoder loved to lead and if someone gave a number, they would have to begin at once or Mollie would lead. John Graber had a great voice and led in a very unique way. He never sang the last phrase but prepared to lead the next verse while the congregation finished the last sentence. Then he began a solo on the next verse. Simon Slabaugh was a musical man and learned notes and soon became a good chorister.

Winter Bible school was a very interesting time of study. Many subjects on Bible doctrine were taught until we were indoctrinated in the truth. Many winter months were

## Edward

*pilgrimage of a mind*

*The journal of Edward Yoder, edited by his sister, Ida Yoder, was published this summer. The October MHB will feature something on the life and thought of this significant leader, and his analysis of the Mennonite scene from the turn-of-the-century to the time of his death in 1945. (Volume available for \$20.00 from Ida Yoder, 180 Hall Drive, Wadsworth, Ohio 44281.)*



Edward Yoder with his son, Virgil, about 1935.



spent with E.S. Hallman teaching us the rudiments of music as well as various subjects of the Bible. Among the scriptures that were emphasized Romans 12 was often used. This scripture is truly Mennonite.

## Recent Publications

Berkey, William Albert and Ruth Berkey Reichley, Compilers. *The Berkey Book*. Arlington, Virginia, 1984. Pp. 527. \$21.00. Order from Ruth Berkey Reichley, 2939 N. Nottingham St., Arlington, VA 22207.

Birky, Jacob W. *My Autobiography*. Gibson City, Illinois, 1964. Pp. 48. Order from Verle and Margaret Oyer, R.R. 2, Lakeview Estates, Gibson City, IL 60936.

Bontrager, Ella and Esther Miller. *Family Record of Cornelius S. Beachy and Magdalena Swartzentruber Descendants, 1862-1984*. 1984. Pp. 167. Order from Dan A. Hochstetler, Topeka, IN 46571.

Byler, Mrs. John S., et al. *Descendants of Jonathan J. Miller & Elizabeth Wengerd and Daniel D. Schlabach & Mary E. Hershberger*. Gordonville, Pennsylvania, 1976. Pp. 70. \$26.00.

Helmuth, Orva, Compiler. *Amish and Mennonite Cemeteries of Moultrie and Douglas County, Arthur, Illinois*. Arthur, Illinois, 1985. Pp. 136. \$6.95 plus \$1.00 postage and handling. Order from compiler, R. 2, Box 174, Arthur, IL 61911.

## Book Reviews

*God's Revolution, The Witness of Eberhard Arnold*. Edited by the Hutterian Society of Brothers and John Howard Yoder. New York: Paulist Press, 1984. Pp. 224. \$8.95.

*God's Revolution* is one superb collection of gems from the rich heritage of communalism as a mode of the Christian Church's life and witness. These excerpts are drawn from the Hutterian Society of Brothers' considerable collection of the messages and writings of its temporal founder, Eberhard Arnold. The total collection is divided into four major sub-

sections titled as follows: This Crumbling Order and God's Coming Order; The New Order Fleshed Out; The Individual and the Community; and finally, Peace and the Rule of God.

This reviewer has been a devoted reader of the excellent publications that have issued from the Plough Publishing House for many years and now takes pleasure in seeing this witness distilled and published by a larger press that commands the attention of the major segments of the Christian Church. The work is prefaced by the renowned author Malcolm Muggeridge who lives virtually next door to the Society's community in Robertsbridge, East Sussex, England. Here too the skills of the Society's editors are joined by those of John Howard Yoder who has written a particularly informative and pungent Introduction, leading the reader succinctly into both the outer and inner life of this bold, yet modest Christian experiment that began in Sannerz, Germany late in 1920. This dynamic seed grew and continues to grow through its traumatic exoduses into Switzerland, Liechtenstein, England, Paraguay, and the United States and now again into England.

Here the reader will find the core of communal vitality laid bare. This is done under such sub-topics as The Church Unity and the Holy Spirit, Community, Repentance and Baptism, The Lord's Supper, Worship and Mission. When Speaking of the Individual in Community, the excerpts enable the reader to look with depth at topics such as The Body of Believers, Leadership and Service, Admonition and Forgiveness, and Marriage and the Family. The brief passages expose teachings of a subtle but strikingly different sort than what mainline Christendom has fed upon for centuries—a sort that is markedly reminiscent of the New Testament. The impact left is that here indeed is a revolution brewing. John Howard Yoder says of Arnold: "He saw himself as a servant of a vision which he did not invent, a herald of a cause incommensurably greater than his service to it," yet his service was of such a nature as to never allow that vision to be lost or even to blur.

If anyone is not likely to read any of the other books coming out of this communal tradition, then let the one book that is read be this one. And if,

as in this reviewer's case, one will read extensively in this understanding of the Christian faith, then this book is likely to become a guidebook to an expression of Christianity that can never be dismissed for it bears the stamp of the unity and Spirit of Christ.

It is difficult to imagine a more straightforward and succinct statement than the one Arnold made to the members' meeting at the Rhoñ Bruderhof in the spring of 1933: "We oppose outright the present order of society. We represent a different order, that of the communal Church as it was in Jerusalem after the Holy Spirit was poured out. The multitude of believers became one heart and one soul. On the social level, their oneness was visible in their perfect brotherliness. On the economic level, it meant that they gave up all private property and lived in complete community of goods, free from any compulsion. And so we are called to represent the same in the world today which quite naturally will bring us into conflicts. We cannot put this burden on anybody unless he or she prizes the greatness of God's Kingdom above everything else and feels inwardly certain that there is no other way to go."

Before we stumble at the strength of this word, let us recognize the humility of Arnold's spirit expressed in what he said at a meeting of novices and guests two years later: "We believe in God's mercy for everyone. For this reason we feel no need to make all humankind members of the Bruderhof . . . We don't think that anyone who doesn't come to us is lost, but we want to live this way to the end of our lives because we believe that this is our calling for the sake of all humankind." I for one treasure this dimension of our Anabaptist heritage even though I have not chosen to espouse it. It continues to hold before all who are open to it a tangible expression of the unity for which our Lord earnestly prayed and toward which all who follow Christ are journeying.

This book will be a bracing spiritual tonic to all who read it reflectively. May it nurture us on our way to the Kingdom of God as we follow the One who came to announce its beginning and to invite all who will to follow Him.

—Gerald C. Studer



# Mennonite Historical Bulletin

Vol. XLVI

October, 1985

ISSN 0025-9357

No. 4

## John F. Funk and the Elkhart Institute

by Bryan Kehr

From the time of his business success in the lumberyards of Chicago in the early 1860s, to his founding and continued leadership of the Mennonite Publishing Company, 1864ff, John F. Funk put ideas into practice among the Mennonites. He introduced Sunday schools to the Northern Indiana Mennonite congregations and elsewhere, helped to establish a thriving Prairie Street Congregation in Elkhart—serving first as a minister and later as bishop—and through church work and publication of the *Herald of Truth* and *Herold der Wahrheit*, grew mightily in his broad influence upon the Mennonite Church. With Funk's sphere of influence, ability to get things done, and commitment to Christian education, it was no accident that Dr. H.A. Mumaw, a physician, asked Funk to meet with him and other interested people at Mumaw's home in the spring of 1894, to discuss the possibility of starting a school which would help keep Mennonite youth in the church, while at the same time fulfilling their growing desire for further education.

J.S. Hartzler reported that "all felt the need of such a school, but some questioned whether the Church was ready to father a proposition like that."<sup>1</sup> According to Hartzler, the group met again three weeks later and still could not agree on a plan for a church school; however, they did encourage Mumaw to start a school, as a private enterprise, in the fall of 1894. Dr. Mumaw, previous to his training as a physician, had experience in the administration of schools. He had served as a catalyst for the meetings of the brethren who had come together to discuss the educational question, and he believed strongly enough in the project to carry through with the work on his own. John F. Funk was content to let Dr. Mumaw develop his plan, having little time himself to devote to such a project. Funk believed it would be

best for the school to be a private business venture, rather than to become a possible financial liability for the church. Furthermore, he believed that running the school as a private venture would not create division in the church, at a time when the idea of higher education was a debated controversy in the Mennonite Church. The Mennonite Publishing Company, which Funk operated on business principles, served as an obvious example of a large business run for the church at this time, and Funk believed a school, even if established for the church, could be managed in a similar way.

In 1894 the Elkhart Institute was established, based on the idea of a private business. It slowly evolved into a church institution, a transformation which Funk opposed. His opposition to the Institute as an ecclesiastical institution was based on several factors: a growing tension within the Prairie Street Congregation, Funk's disagreement with some policies of the Institute, his personal conflicts with the organizers of the Institute, and differences of opinion over the best way to organize and manage an institution for the church.

To understand why Funk was not more involved with establishing the Institute, one must note the circumstances of Funk's life during this time. Managing the Mennonite Publishing Company, attending church conferences to report for the *Herald of Truth* and often to present an address or to preach, and in general, serving as a minister and evangelist, kept Funk busy. Fulfilling these obligations would be a hard task for anyone to accomplish, even for Funk.

In 1892, two years before the education question emerged in full force, the church called John F. Funk to serve as bishop. This new responsibility added a still heavier burden upon Funk, and took a heavy toll. A careful analysis of the events during

the next ten years that Funk served as bishop indicates that he may have lost some of his flexibility in his relations with the congregation and other associates. The increased responsibilities and pressures, as well as the fact that Funk was nearing his sixtieth birthday in 1895, and gradually would probably have less energy to give, may have been the cause of Funk's poor physical condition at the time the Elkhart Institute opened.

In his diary Funk records that he did not preach from July 1894 to February 1895 due to throat problems (laryngitis). He states: "I must say on this account the past eight months have been months of trial and care which indeed make life wearisome, but with the continual evidences of God's loving kindness being with us and about us, knowing that God never leaves nor forsakes those who put their trust in him, we pass through the severest trials and the Lord shows us continually how



Dr. H.A. Mumaw, founder of the Elkhart Institute and personal friend of J.F. Funk, circa 1894. (AMC, Phoebe Mumaw Collection.)



## Editorial

*This issue of the MHB features two essays, the first, on the 1890s and the question of education; and the second, introducing the wisdom and ideas of a somewhat forgotten yet veritable Mennonite philosopher and man of letters Edward Yoder (1893-1945).*

*Bryan Kehr's penetrating essay on John F. Funk and the beginning struggles of the Elkhart Institute is the final MHB tribute to Funk in this year commemorating his birth 150 years ago in 1830. It is based in part on recently discovered documentation in the Goshen College presidential papers, housed in the Archives of the Mennonite Church. Uncertain beginnings in Elkhart, Indiana, mark the early life and developments—and political maneuverings—of the fledgling institution that initiated higher education in the (Old) Mennonite Church in 1894.*

*The second essay, by Leonard Gross, serves at the same time as a Foreword in Edward, Pilgrimage of a mind, Ida Yoder (ed.), 1985, which contains the journal of Edward Yoder. (The book is available for \$20.00 from Ida Yoder, 180 Hall Drive, Wadsworth, Ohio 44281.) In the volume itself, Guy F. Hershberger's Introduction and Ida Yoder's Preface round out the background needed for a better understanding of the issues that Edward Yoder deals with throughout his journal, spanning the years 1931 to 1945, with extensive flashbacks to the time of his earliest memories, from circa 1900 and following.*

*The Edward Yoder volume is unique—in the actual sense of the word. No other voice in the 1930s, at least heretofore discovered, has been found within the Mennonite Church which has dared to speak out sympathetically yet so openly and critically—albeit even here, only on paper for the author's own eyes to see—about the state of the Mennonite Church: the heights to which it might climb, yet also the travail through which its members, alas, also need to wend their ways.*

*Will we always, in this world, stand under the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, one foot in the shade of despair, and one foot in the sunlight of hope? Edward Yoder talks about and accepts both sides of life; for him, however, the power of the New Creation also reigns, and optimism wins the day.*

—Leonard Gross

near he is and how his eyes are ever upon us, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Blessed be his name forever. . . . I spoke only what was necessary.”

As a personal friend of Dr. Mumaw, Funk watched from a distance as Mumaw began the Institute, but clearly had no part in directing the work; indeed, Funk was out of the public view, to a certain extent, during this time.

Dr. Mumaw organized the school which on the first day, September 21, 1894, had one teacher, F.A. Hosmer, and four students, two of whom had promised to work for their tuition. With the addition of a commercial department, with T.P. Lhamon as instructor, the enrollment increased. In the early years of the Institute, commercial courses such as book-keeping and shorthand attracted more students than the academic courses.

On May 16, 1895, less than a year after the founding of the Institute, the Elkhart Institute Association was founded. The charter members included H.A. Mumaw, J.S. Coffman, D.J. Johns, Jonathan Kurtz, D.D. Miller, J.S. Hartzler, Samuel Yoder, F.W. Brunk, Herman Yoder, W.P. Coffman, A.C. Kolb, J.O. Martin, Noah Lehman, and N.S. Hoover. John F. Funk's name is noticeably absent from this listing. The new Association elected Dr. Mumaw, the founder of the Elkhart Institute, as president of the Board of Directors.

In the fall of 1895, J.S. Coffman visited Pennsylvania and Canada, soliciting funds and selling stock for the Elkhart Institute Association. His work proved successful and enabled the Association to build a new school building, dedicated in February 1896. Coffman's success at fund-raising and promoting the school to the Mennonite communities, along

with his dedication to the concept of a church school, played a large part in his election as president of the Board at the annual meeting on April 11, 1896. In his diary Coffman records: “They elected me president of the Board, much as I feel incompetent.”

J.S. Coffman's election, however, marked the beginning of some tension within the management of the new school. A.C. Kolb recalls: “Because it was insisted that J.S. Coffman should be president, so that in his evangelistic tours he might advertise the new ‘Church School,’ secretary Kolb was twice waited upon by several of the stockholders, including M.S. Steiner, Noah Hoover, and John C. Martin, who entreated him to make room for a realignment of officers in order that Coffman might be chosen president, and Dr. Mumaw who had founded the school might continue the work of developing it in the capacity of secretary.”<sup>2</sup> By acquiescing to the wishes of this group, Kolb, who served as the first secretary of the Board and held a significant amount of stock, was displaced as a member of this policy-making body.

In June 1896 Dr. Mumaw, who was unhappy with the new realignment of the Board, resigned his position as secretary. The Board appointed Fred W. Brunk as secretary. In 1898 Mumaw was again elected to the board as secretary and resigned on the day of the election. Eventually, Dr. Mumaw sold his interest in the Elkhart Institute Association and the stockholders accepted his official resignation as a member of the Association at their meeting on August 20, 1898. In September of 1898, Dr. Mumaw established the Elkhart Normal School and Business College.

The split in 1898 between the Board of the Elkhart Institute and Dr. Mumaw polarized the Prairie Street Congregation. Leaders of both of the established schools attended the congregation. As early as 1898 John F. Funk and J.S. Coffman, both ministers at Prairie Street, note in

The *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* is published quarterly by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church and distributed to the members of the Mennonite Historical Association. **Editor:** Leonard Gross; **Assistant Editor:** Rachel Shenk; **Book Review Editor:** Gerald C. Studer; **Office Editor:** Bryan Kehr; **Production and Design:** Julia Lind; **Associate Editors:** Rafael Falcon, Jan Gleysteen, Merle Good, Amos B. Hoover, Albert N. Keim, James Mininger, Winifred Paul, Lorraine Roth, Shirley Showalter, Wilmer Swope, and J. C. Wenger. Dues for regular membership (\$5), contributing membership (\$10-25), supporting membership (\$50), sustaining membership (\$100-250), and sponsoring membership (\$500 and above) per year may be sent to the editor. (Library rate: \$5 per year.) Articles and news items should be addressed to the editor, 1700 S. Main Street, Goshen, Indiana 46526 (Tel. 219/533-3161, Ext. 477).

Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts*. Microfilms of Volumes I-XLIV of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* are available from: University Microfilms, Inc., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.





G.A.R. Hall. Classes were held in a portion of this building until the Elkhart Institute Association raised a building by the spring of 1896. (AMC, Phoebe Mumaw Collection.)

their diaries growing conflict within the congregation. Funk writes that "the establishment of a school of higher education at Elkhart enlarged and multiplied the difficulty" in the congregation.<sup>3</sup> This became especially apparent after Mumaw established the second school, with both competing for scholars and dollars.

Exactly when John F. Funk became actively concerned about the affairs of the Elkhart Institute is not certain. However, one can be sure that by 1898 Bishop Funk was watching carefully the business of the Institute. In his personal collection of papers, handwritten notes taken by Funk of the February 12, 1898, meeting of stockholders indicate that the school issue was of concern to him. Funk notes that "the conduct of the officers of the Board of Directors of the Elkhart Institute at the annual meeting held February 12, 1898, was certainly very contrary to Phil. 2:3—"Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." "<sup>4</sup> The troubles in the Prairie Street Congregation and the development of the Elkhart Institute now intertwined inseparably together. The existence of both the Elkhart Institute and the Elkhart Normal School and Business College, eventually became a major influence in splitting the two competing school factions within the congregation.

At nearly the same time the differences between Dr. H.A. Mumaw and the Elkhart Institute Association developed, some friction between

J.S. Coffman and John F. Funk also began. The *Herald of Truth*, through which Funk employed J.S. Coffman for 18 years, dropped Coffman as assistant editor. In his diary Coffman notes (March 10, 1897): "This morning I went to the Mennonite Publishing Company office and wrote the lesson for the Review of the third quarter. This finished the lessons and, with them, my work at the Mennonite Publishing Company. At the beginning of the year I was dropped from the *Herald* where my name had been for nearly 18 years as Assistant Editor. The most I had done at editing for some years was editing the Lesson Helps. After noon I moved my desk out of the Men-

nonite Publishing Company office to my new home, in Brother Daniel [Coffman's] house at 1222 Eden Street. Here I expect to write the lessons for the Helps."

Funk notes at this time that some of the employees he dismissed, "could draw a good salary, while they would have the privilege of spending a large share of their time in enjoying themselves in different ways among the brotherhood, and having a good time while their good pay in the house went on, to the detriment of the best interests of the business. We of course understood the business of the house and they did not."<sup>5</sup>

A look at the diary of J.S. Coffman shows that before his dismissal from the Mennonite Publishing Company he did spend a great deal of time traveling and some time looking after the interests of the Elkhart Institute Association, which may have stretched the limits of his agreement with the Mennonite Publishing Company. However, one should note that J.S. Coffman began his evangelistic work in earnest with the encouragement of John F. Funk. A portion of Coffman's travels were done, originally, to relieve Funk of some travel responsibilities. It seems that the mutually agreeable relationship between the two parties simply broke down.

At this time John F. Funk had other concerns as well. He saw the Mennonite Book and Tract Society as a competitor to the interests of the Mennonite Publishing Company. Perhaps he even envisioned a parallel



Elkhart Institute building, Spring, 1896. (Photo courtesy of the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen, Indiana.)



to the fate of Dr. Mumaw, whose private enterprise had been turned into a church institution, at Dr. Mumaw's expense. It is clear from Funk's writings that he feared a similar fate for the Mennonite Publishing Company. Indeed, at a later date much of the work of John F. Funk was transferred to the new church publishing house at Scottdale, Pennsylvania, which was a church institution, and not a private business run for the church. In his diary for September 3, 1898, Funk notes that the Mennonite Book and Tract Society made a "proposition to buy out the Mennonite Publishing Company but the poor fellows have no money." In a defense Funk wrote (circa 1900): "There had been a decided opposition against the publishing house."<sup>6</sup> The fact that J.S. Coffman served as a member of the executive committee of the Mennonite Book and Tract Society and worked in the interests of that committee compounded the tenseness of the relationship between John F. Funk and J.S. Coffman.

While it appears that J.S. Coffman and John F. Funk experienced a change in their relationship, both institutionally and on a personal level, it also appears that they retained the ability to discuss issues frankly with each other. In his diary for November 24, 1897, Funk wrote: "The event of the day was a meeting called by J.S. Coffman, who wanted all concerned in the new tract work to be present. He delivered his message and then took his hat and coat and was going to leave. We did not allow him to close, but kept him until we could have our say. We kindly told him his faults and finally made a concession upon which he expects [to]

work and bring about reconciliation between the Mennonite Book and Tract Society and the Mennonite Publishing Company."

J.S. Coffman records of the conversation that day: "I am convinced that the late moves of the society will engender strife if there is no radical change in their conduct. I have prayed much over the matter, and simply did a hard duty. I pray God's blessing on the talk we had together." Funk and Coffman note many other similar discussions in their diaries. Both Funk and Coffman consequently felt strongly about the issues, but recognized the dangers implicit in not communicating their concerns and plans face to face.

The conglomeration of problems at this time, therefore, included: the tense, but still workable personal relationship between John F. Funk and John S. Coffman, who directed the Mennonite Publishing Company and Elkhart Institute respectively; the growing tension and division within the Prairie Street Congregation; the split between the Elkhart Institute Association and Dr. H.A. Mumaw, resulting in two competing schools organized by members of the same congregation; and the sense of persecution Funk felt from the Mennonite Book and Tract Society. In addition, Funk did not feel comfortable with some of the activities associated with the Elkhart Institute and the manner in which the Institute was being run. Funk writes concerning the Institute in this regard: "The following things need to be corrected speedily and urgently:

"1. A proper spirit and humility needs to be incubated, taught, and practiced, both by the teachers and leaders of the school as well as the

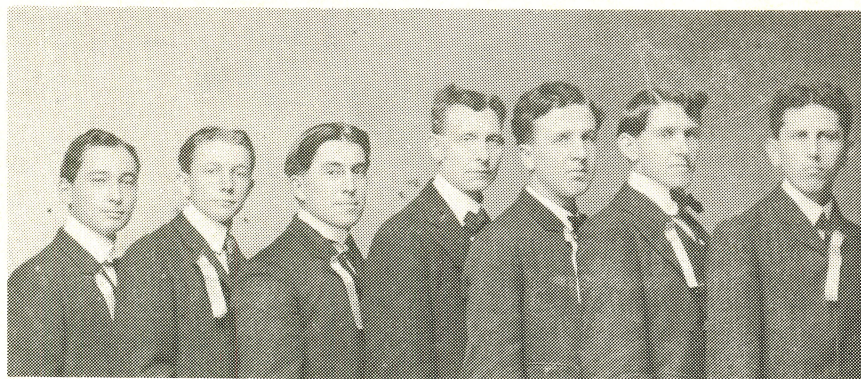
students, remembering that God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble;

"2. In matters of dress the young brethren should keep themselves restrained as well as the sisters. This should be made a special point with the overseers of the school. The wearing of badges of all kinds, the display of flowers on the dress of both brethren and sisters should be discouraged and reprov'd;

"3. The students should be taught to esteem and respect the church and overseers of the church."<sup>7</sup>

There were other concerns Funk had about the behavior of students and faculty at the Elkhart Institute. In his diary for March 27, 1898, Funk notes that "Brother Hartzler made confession for allowing young people to take a photograph on the front yard in [the] viewing of the public street" on a Sunday afternoon. The Institute, Funk believed, must not condone practices which did not correspond to the discipline of the Prairie Street Congregation.

It is at this point, perhaps, that John S. Coffman helped to pacify Funk on activities of the Elkhart Institute. While still promoting the school, Coffman could at times be critical of Institute activities. Examples from his diary include: February 7, 1896—"This evening the young folk have their literary at the school house. I advise them to use their time better, but this may be of a better class than most literaries are"; October 22, 1897—"The hall was well-filled this evening [for the literary society]. Some came in only for amusement and did not behave well. If I had been a critic I would have criticized the audience rather than the speakers"; November 17, 1897—"This evening the young folks went to the first of a lecture course in the opera house. It was a company of some renown. I have some misgivings as to the propriety of our people attending that lecture course. There are, doubtless, some good things presented, but whether the general education of the course will tend to promote spiritual life is another question"; April 29, 1898—"This evening I attended the recitation and entertainment of Miss Wheeler, [who] also gave one of her recitals at the Institute. It was more entertaining than edifying"; and March 11, 1899—"Attended chapel. Mr. Heasley gave a talk on geology, or



Gymnasium Boys at Elkhart, (l. to r.): M.C. Lehman, Guy Root, C.E. Bender, Director (J.W. Yoder?), R.R. Ebersole, J.E. Hartzler (President of Goshen College, 1913-1918), and H.F. Reist (President of Goshen College, 1919-1920). Note the badges worn by the men, which were a source of irritation to Funk. (AMC, J.A. and Lina Ressler Collection.)



earth formation. He has many of the late ideas, somewhat contradictory of the Bible account, which will doubtless be exploded in large measure as we become more learned."

Upon Coffman's death in 1899, the Institute lost its major leader who understood the art of criticism and its application to the activities of the school. In 1899 a committee appointed by the new Mennonite General Conference, only one year into its existence, examined the Elkhart Institute and recommended to the Conference that the Institute be considered a church organization worthy of the support of its members. Although John F. Funk had originally encouraged the dialogue for a General Conference, he later opposed it in part because of what he considered to be interference in the affairs of the Elkhart congregation. Funk believed that the General Conference held no real authority to determine which institutions were or were not church institutions. He believed the General Conference could not truly be empowered with policy-making abilities until all conferences, or at least a majority, recognized and supported it. Funk felt the action of declaring the Elkhart Institute a church institution was a power the General Conference consequently usurped from the Indiana-Michigan Conference, which at that time would probably not have backed the Institute. This problem became more complex because those associated with the Elkhart Institute, and some of their close friends, were actively promoting a General Conference.

The tension in Elkhart continued to mount throughout 1899. On April 29, 1899, J.S. Coffman records in his diary: "This afternoon I spent the time writing letters, and considering the advisability of resigning my position as president and director of the Elkhart Institute, and finally wrote out my resignation." Coffman's declining health and strained relationship with John F. Funk, who by this time was one of the leaders among those opposing the Elkhart Institute, were major factors in his resignation. He hoped to bring about reconciliation through this move, but the school board did not accept his resignation. He therefore continued, up to the time of his death in July 1899. J.S. Hartzler writes that the death of J.S. Coffman "seemed like a



One of the first classes held in the new Institute building, March 20, 1896. (Photo courtesy of the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen, Indiana.)

severe blow to the school. Her enemies became more bold. The debts of the institution were increasing without any means of liquidating them."<sup>8</sup>

With the death of J.S. Coffman the two disparate factions in the church at Elkhart apparently lost their important communication link. While at odds on the issues, John F. Funk and J.S. Coffman still held the church together. The conflict over the school problem climaxed in August 1899, only one month after the death of J.S. Coffman. John F. Funk, J.S. Lehman, A.K. Funk, and C.C. Shoemaker wrote a letter on August 5, 1899, to all stockholders, urging them to vote from a set of seven candidates for the Elkhart Institute Board of Directors. The ultimate goal of the group led by Funk was to bring the two Elkhart schools, which different members of the Elkhart congregation operated, together. This group also hoped that by influencing the elections, they would be able to bring the Elkhart Institute more directly under the control of the Elkhart congregation.

J.S. Hartzler countered with a letter to all stockholders on August 10, 1899, recommending five candidates. The first group countered with a second circular on the same day. J.S. Hartzler notes that "the annual meeting of the stockholders on August 19, 1899, was a stormy time."<sup>9</sup> The voting resulted in the election of two Funk-supported and three Hartzler-supported represen-

tatives. Funk failed in his attempt to gain the majority.

John F. Funk continued to oppose the Elkhart Institute, just as the church troubles continued unabated in Elkhart. In a memorandum Funk wrote, to defend his actions relative to the Elkhart Institute, he summarizes his thoughts on the matter: "We state above that the Elkhart Institute was one of the special institutions that desired to be recognized by the General Conference, and this truly for most selfish ends. This institution has a most unfavorable record, and this can be shown by actual facts by those who have not been directly connected with it. It has caused the Church much trouble in many ways; pride and popularity have been, if not the ends sought, the outcome of the work. It has been a hotbed of dissension almost since it first organized as a corporation. Are the people—is the church at large—ready to receive an institution of this kind under its wings? . . .

"The school question is one that has its opposers as a church institution. Our brethren would not object if private brethren would have a school for advanced education even; but to have it pushed on the Conference and compel them to recognize it as a church institution, is another thing."<sup>10</sup>

Conditions in the Prairie Street Congregation deteriorated, until in November and December of 1900 a portion of the congregation, many connected directly or indirectly to the



Elkhart Institute, rented a store room to hold their own Sunday school and church services. As a result of their action Funk suspended fifteen of the prominent leaders of this group.

Shortly after those who were connected with the Elkhart Institute began holding separate meetings, Funk records that a deacon and a number of brethren from the Amish-Mennonite Congregation at Sterling, Illinois, who held stock in the Elkhart Institute Association, wrote to the Amish-Mennonite Conference of the state of Indiana requesting them to "provide a place of worship for the members of the Elkhart Institute where they could worship in peace." Funk accused those involved of manifesting a "very uncharitable and unwise spirit, by ignoring altogether the Mennonite Conference of the state of Indiana (inasmuch as the church at Elkhart is a Mennonite church) and appealing to the Amish-Mennonite Conference (which has no jurisdiction here) for a correction of these supposed wrongs."<sup>11</sup>

The Elkhart Institute, as well as the Mennonite Publishing Company, brought together ministers and lay members from various locations who had different perceptions of church polity. As early as July 24, 1895, J.S. Coffman noted in his diary some tension between Amish-Mennonite and Mennonite members during a meeting of the Elkhart Institute Association. He wrote: "There is just a little friction between some Amish and Mennonite members, and we must use care to have all go harmonious, and keep away all suspicion by treating all parties with due deference." After the split in the congregation at Elkhart, and the appeal to the Amish-Mennonite Conference of Indiana by several Illinois Amish-Mennonites, it appears John F. Funk responded by refusing the Prairie Street pulpit to visiting Amish-Mennonite ministers.

In 1901 the Elkhart congregation called for a committee, composed of brethren who were not associated with the Elkhart congregation, to come and try to bring about reconciliation in the church. Many confessions were required and the two factions again began to worship together. As a result of the committee's actions, John F. Funk was rendered inactive as a bishop in January 1902. The committee recommended that Funk could be

reinstated after one year with a proper vote of confidence, but the congregation never did this. In his later years, Funk still contended that the committee had never fully understood him; but he abided by their decision for the sake of unity in the congregation.

Although John F. Funk advocated Christian education through the development of Sunday schools and literature, it is clear that he opposed the organization of the Elkhart Institute as a church institution. John F. Funk believed that a school could be run as a business venture by members of the church. He did not approve of certain activities condoned or sponsored by the school, such as literary societies. Furthermore, the alienation of Dr. H.A. Mumaw by the Elkhart Institute Association, growing tensions within the membership of the Prairie Street Congregation, disagreements over church polity, together with personal conflicts with J.S. Coffman, prompted Funk to oppose the school.

Although inactive as a bishop, John F. Funk still rendered services to the Mennonite Church as a minister and through the Mennonite Publishing Company. Funk still considered himself to be a friend of the "right kind of education." Even during the most turbulent times Funk addressed the students of the Elkhart Institute. A copy of a chapel address delivered to the students in November 1899 bears witness to this fact. Published below are excerpts of another address delivered by Funk entitled, "A School Sermon," which suggest Funk's affirmation of higher education, if it is meshed with the eternal truths of the Christian tradition. This speech was probably delivered during the 1901-1902 school year as a chapel address, since Funk speaks directly to the students.<sup>12</sup>

### A School Sermon

#### (excerpts)

. . . A very strong and marked desire for education has taken hold of our young people and they are thirsting for education. And, in their aspirations for a higher education, they have run—just as some of us older ones who have only been able to attain a very limited education—into some serious errors. I wish to present

some of these for our consideration.

The popular idea of education is simply to get knowledge, to pass through school, to take a course and graduate, without even thinking that it is necessary also to have wisdom. . . . With this idea alone, education, if it does not make tyrants and devils, at best, makes fools, and fills the world with men and women who are of no [greater] earthly utility than to corrupt the world and make people unhappy. . . .

The grand purpose of true education is always to make men wiser and better; to fit them for the active duties of life; to fit them for a higher and nobler life, for the very best life a man can live in this world; to make people first to understand themselves; to know, like the Psalmist puts it, that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, physically, mentally, spiritually, that we were created for high and grand purposes; to understand our relation to the world, to our fellow men, to our God and to the Church.

The popular tide of education too runs in the line that makes infidels, atheists, evolutionists, spiritualists, etc. So to sum it up briefly, the popular stream of education today runs antagonistic to true piety and true religion. I know I shall bring opprobrium upon myself by venturing this remark, but facts can show pride, vanity, high-mindedness, arrogance, display of talents, smartness, and an over-bearing spirit, self-exalted looking down upon others less educated, or occupying humble positions in life. The idea seems to be that book learning is the acme of excellence in everything. This idea, of course, is talked and held up. . . . Education of this kind, says the apostle, is sensual and devilish.

We want to understand what a true education consists of. Get Solomon's idea and God's idea of education—the Wisdom from above which is pure, peaceable, etc. Education and religion are handmaids, when education is kept in harmony with the teachings of the Word of God. In this, our school here occupies a peculiar position, and its relation to the Church is of peculiar significance. And if our church is to prosper, the Elkhart Institute must give her a helping hand. On the other hand if the Elkhart Institute is to prosper, the church will have to recognize the school and exercise a parental, father-



ly influence over her. But a father or a mother cannot recognize a disobedient and ungrateful child. If then the Elkhart Institute hopes to succeed, it must be under the care of the church. . . . The entire management and control of the school must be brought under the direction and care of the church.

The government, discipline, management, course of instruction, methods of teaching all must be brought into entire harmony with the church. To this end her officers and corps of teachers must be men in full harmony with the church and her doctrines, her discipline, her forms of worship and her rules of order. And the school must be conducted in harmony with these things—it is supposed, [here,] that the chief patronage of the school will be drawn from Mennonite people.

If the Elkhart Institute has pure teaching, pure morals and Bible principles, then the churches outside of Elkhart will have benefit and blessings from the Institute. But if popular dress, vanity, self-exaltation, and worldly conformity go out and contaminate the churches abroad, it will only bring ruin to the church.

Now you students who go out, make Mennonitism your watchword. It has enough that is good and peculiar . . . that [it] will employ your strength, wisdom and ability. These noble doctrines for which our fathers suffered and died, let it be your purpose with intensified power to teach, live and maintain.

Let every social circle, every family circle, every neighborhood, every church circle realize and learn that you have been educated in a Mennonite school, in a school where the true principles of the Gospel are held up and maintained. Maintain your plain and humble customs—dress plain, speak plain, sing more of the good old-fashioned hymns which your fathers sing in their devoted piety—and not so much of the he-haw-haw which people do not understand.

Be Christian. Avoid and shun the popular tide of folly and sin and worldly conformity. And don't be smart and put yourself way above others so high. Be honest. Don't cater to the church when you are in the church. And be true.

2 Hist. Mss. 1-15, Phoebe Mumaw Kolb Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen.

3 Hist. Mss. 1-1, John F. Funk Collection, Box 64/4, Archives of the Mennonite Church.

4 Hist. Mss. 1-1, John F. Funk Collection, Box 64/4.

5 Hist. Mss. 1-1, John F. Funk Collection, Box 52.

6 Hist. Mss. 1-1, John F. Funk Collection, Box 64/4.

7 Hist. Mss. 1-1, John F. Funk Collection, Box 63/19.

8 Hist. Mss. 1-197, Silas Hertzler Collection, Box 3/33, p. 7.

9 Hist. Mss. 1-197, Silas Hertzler Collection, Box 3/33, p. 7.

10 Hist. Mss. 1-1, John F. Funk Collection, Box 49/1.

11 Hist. Mss. 1-1, John F. Funk Collection, Box 64/11.

12 Hist. Mss. 1-1, John F. Funk Collection, Box 56/27.

### Other Sources

John F. Funk Diaries, Hist. Mss. 1-1.

John S. Coffman Diaries, Hist. Mss. 1-19.

Elkhart Institute Records, V-4-1.

*Goshen College, 1894-1954*, by John S. Umble.

## Edward Yoder: Pilgrimage of a Mind

by Leonard Gross

Edward Yoder comes out of that creative stock of Iowa Amish-Mennonites that defies ultimate categorization. A certain independence of judgment characterized a handful of church-wide leaders and educators emerging from the Iowa scene in the early twentieth century: Melvin Gingerich, Guy F. Hersberger, C.L. Graber, Esther Graber, J.D. Graber, Lena Graber, Glen Miller, Olive Wyse, Edward Yoder, S.C. Yoder, and many more.

Perhaps at the center of their way lay the conviction that each of them was part of the ecclesiastical process that determined the character of their Mennonite Church. For indeed, it was *their* church, and each of the above-named leaders from Iowa affirmed this principle that "the church is we" in his or her own way of responding to life. And only for those others in the church who did not accept this principle—and after 1898

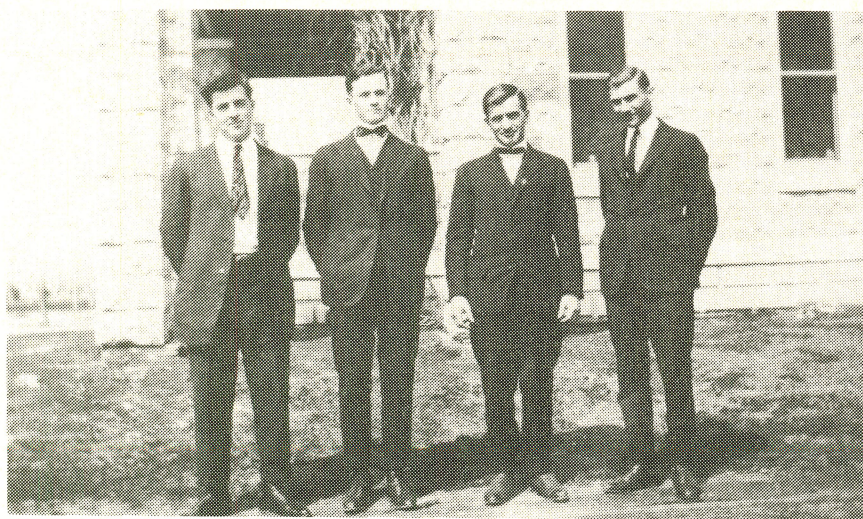
there was such a handful of leaders at the very center of church life—was there an issue at stake that could and did turn problematic. "Such a handful of leaders" did indeed herald a new approach to authority within the church which reached its highest point of effectiveness in the late 1920s and '30s, and ultimately reached an impasse, not to be resolved until the year 1944, in large part through the efforts of an Iowa Mennonite leader, S.C. Yoder, who helped restore reconciliation within the Mennonite General Conference at its specially-called meeting at Goshen, Indiana, that year.

In the meantime, two full decades of authoritarian leadership had come into being, which entered center stage soon after the end of the First World War in 1918. The effects were a new approach to doctrine, seen in the 1921 "Confession," established at the Mennonite General Conference sessions in Garden City, Missouri. When Goshen College reopened its doors in 1924, these same doctrinal effects were felt there, educationally and theologically. Profound changes also took place within the semi-autonomous Mennonite Women's Missionary Society when in 1928 it was placed under the Mission Board and given a new name, the General Sewing Circle Committee of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities; a clearly authoritarian dynamic was at hand, overriding the concerns of the women leaders of MWMS. In those same years leading up to 1928, ecclesiastical change at the "center" also transformed Hesston College (see below).

It would be too long a story to recount how all this came about. The larger framework, however, includes the terminus a quo of 1898, when the highly influential *Bible Doctrines* was published the same year that the Mennonite Church became a formal denomination with the birth of Mennonite General Conference, only in its infancy in 1898, that would emerge by the 1920s as a new force on the Mennonite Church scene, challenging the traditional structures of autonomous Mennonite (regional) conferences, which had been the traditional church structures before 1898. During this same post-1898 era, Mennonite theology and piety also took on a profound doctrinal transformation.

1 "Elkhart Institute," ms., p. 2, Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen.





Hesston College's "Apollo" Men's Quartet in 1918: (l. to r.) Stanley Brubacher, Willard Smith, Edward Yoder and Chris Graber.

**The Nature and Significance of Edward Yoder's Journal.** Journals are lifelong companions, on whose pages may be entrusted all those thoughts and dreams that otherwise would escape at that given moment when they are most coveted and needed. All authors at certain points in their writing careers must have longed for more extensive journal entries from which to draw ideas and experiences—that unfortunately, meanwhile, had dissipated into thin air. A journal may well spell the difference between failure and success.

There is yet another reason to create a journal—rather, a reason that actually calls for the continuing of a diary well past the teen-aged phase of “entrusting to its pages those secret areas of my life.” What if my ideas and feelings, upon discovery, would lead to tragic consequences? Yet at the same time, my not dealing with my innermost thoughts and intuitions honestly, might truly also lead to emotional imbalance—we all know the need to deal honestly with ourselves in some manner or fashion if we do not want to go to pieces or find ourselves out of plumb with what we know to be true and honest and what we believe to be in line with creation and its Creator.

Edward Yoder lived in a Mennonite era when it was dangerous to reveal those doubts which are part and parcel of one's faith, and when the genuine Mennonite forum of an earlier day seemed to be consciously curtailed. How to accommodate without compromise? Edward Yoder managed this delicate feat, in part

through his extremely careful church diplomacy on the outside, and through an honest, reflective meditation between himself and his God, on the inside. The Edward Yoder, as known by those with whom he rubbed shoulders—including his closest friends—seemed very much in tune with the Mennonite political leadership which came into its own in the 1920s, and reigned until well into the Second World War.

A very different Edward Yoder is revealed to us, through the descriptive pages of his Journal that extend from 1931 to 1945 and include extensive flashbacks into the 1920s and earlier. Yoder must have certainly intended his Journal to serve as a source of specific ideas for future publications; he allowed it to serve as a catharsis as well, when there was perhaps no one else to whom he could

entrust certain of his innermost thoughts.

How should we view the classic, progressive, ever-questioning mind of Edward Yoder, and the myriad of ideas that cascaded from his probing intellectualism—couched as they were within a Mennonite framework? Yoder had lived his first 15 years before the new Mennonite Church publishing center in 1908 would begin what would indeed emerge as a more narrowly defined journal, the *Gospel Herald* (broadening its perspectives after 1943), than had been the case for its predecessor, the *Herald of Truth* (1864-1908—see its last editorial in this regard). And Yoder himself charts the path of influence of this new doctrinal movement, with the years just preceding 1928 as setting a sort of watershed, when waves of the new doctrinal approach finally reached Hesston College. Yoder mentions how a number of Hesston College faculty saw this transformation as “a narrow and shortsighted loyalty . . . [with] new ideas . . . [bringing about a] change in policy [which] became noticeable to thoughtful students, patrons and alumni and did much to destroy confidence in the management of the [Hesston] school.” In 1928 and '29, three professors left or were discharged; “their places were taken by the new type, much inferior in personality and in teaching ability, but supposed to be more ‘loyal’ Mennonites” (September 3, 1931 entry).

One can only imagine Yoder to believe that the broader view he had known to be “Mennonite” up to 1928 at Hesston might return. In-

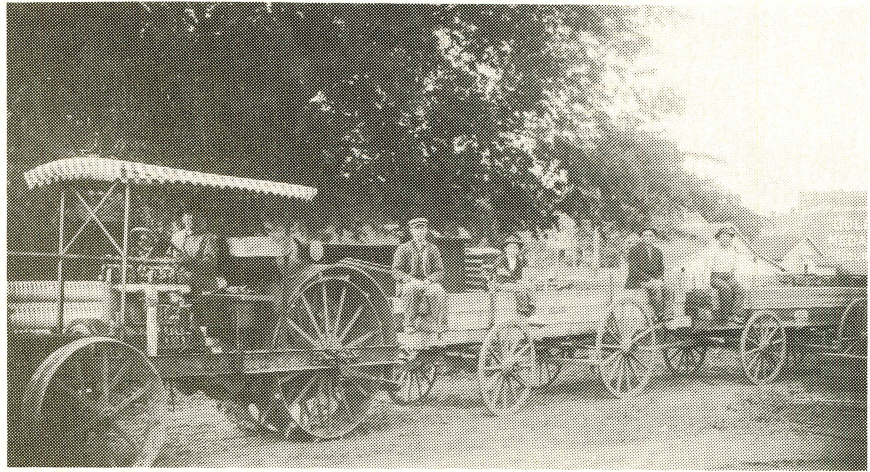


Student Body of Hesston College, 1917-1918. Edward Yoder: second row, second from left.



deed, it was this broader approach which Yoder himself embodied, and never gave up on. Some day, one can imagine, Yoder would have hoped that the earlier, broader vision of what it means to be Mennonite would again effect itself. The day would come when Yoder's ideas could finally find their rightful place, alongside of those of the doctrinal interlude, which had come into being within Yoder's own lifetime. The newer era would take its course, with a return to something broader, and more in tune with the traditional Mennonite approaches to life and faith before the turn of the century. And to be sure, there were positive signals of change in the air by the 1940s—during the last several years of Yoder's lifespan, cut short by cancer in 1945.

**The Measure of a Man.** Edward Yoder's interests ranged as broadly as the breadth and depth of his reading and reflecting. He read the *Atlantic Monthly* every month of every year, with relish, but also many other general as well as specialized journals in his established field of classical studies (Greek and Latin). His wide, wide world of ideas on the one hand were consciously honed with a Mennonite audience in mind, underscoring his church-wide interests and analysis thereof; yet he also could hold his own in the higher criticism of literature, and showed unusual interest in the history of the



Edward Yoder's father (on tractor) in 1915, hauling lumber for a barn. Edward Yoder spent the summer of 1915 at home, after his first semester (winter and spring, 1915) at Hesston College (or Academy, as it was called then).

Jews, as well as in natural history—including a fascination for birds.

Yoder, however, gave himself lifelong to teaching potential disciples of Christ, at Hesston College, then Goshen College, and finally at the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania. He saw himself as a "confirmed individualist," which to him lay at the foundation of the very concept of discipleship and its outworking, tempered of course by the human interaction of the church. Thematically, if there was one area which Edward Yoder gave himself to, it was the reality of peace, and the biblical approach to ecclesiastical nonconformity which lies as a foundation to the way of love and the concomitant result of peace. *Must Christians Fight*, a 1943 publication of the Mennonite Central Committee, exemplifies Yoder's lifelong preoccupation with this theme, and his synthesis of this age-old problem of the Christian's involvement in society.

Yet as early as 1931 Edward Yoder separated himself from the posture of the modernist, although retaining many, but not all of the elements of the liberal, when he spoke about the worth of current ideologies, but also their limitations. And exactly here Yoder turns to his own tradition for clues to the answer of the question of the "isms" which were so hotly debated within Mennonite circles at that very time. We choose to close with this extended quotation which grants us the assurance that with this Mennonite bedrock, embedded as it

is in the Jesus Christ of history and of faith, Edward Yoder the intellectual individualist had truly found those safeguards that allowed him to remain true to his Creator-God, revealed in human flesh:

[There is a] definite delimitation of the human mind, and of the resulting corollary, that to make human reason and intelligence the final measure and tribunal of truth is unsafe. Amid the multiplied knowledge of our time, it requires the effort of a lifetime to master one field of knowledge or one particular viewpoint. It is practically impossible that there will be another Aristotle who will synthesize for us once more all knowledge into a dynamic system of thought. The field is too vast. Nevertheless each age has as its intellectual atmosphere a phase of prevailing philosophy which colors and influences all thinking. Of the influence of the current philosophic mode or fashion no one can be entirely free; at the same time it seems clear that to keep an independent viewpoint, to develop a critical attitude toward modes of thought, would give one a truer perspective, a perception of truth that is nearer correct than is possible for those who are completely "sold" on the current mode. As Mennonites, with four and perhaps more centuries of nonconformist blood running in our veins, with traditions that are more or less radical and independent, we should be in a position to



The "Kansas Thresher." Edward Yoder in 1919. (See Yoder's journal reference, p. 30, where on June 15, 1931, he recalls something of his 1919 summer experience.)



contribute something constructive to the stream of the world's thought—not to reform and direct this stream, but to do a small bit of good in that direction. To this end some few should dedicate themselves to the enormous and lifetime task of getting an understanding of world literature, history, and thought, of developing a style of expression, and of interpreting to the world at large the ideas and ideals that are our heritage. Too many in the past have cast off their heritage after the first or second draught of learning. Others, to arm themselves against such an issue, have adopted the closed-mind attitude (November 29, 1931 entry).

**The Process of Editing the Journal.** It is fitting that the Edward Yoder Journal should be edited and published by his own sister, Ida Yoder, with interpretive reminiscences by Guy F. Hershberger, longtime friend and colleague of Yoder. Ida Yoder, an intellectual in her own right, has seen this project through every step of the way to publication. Hershberger, in the light of his lifelong friendship with Yoder, is the logical historian to attempt a more comprehensive survey of Edward Yoder's significance within his era than could be attempted in this Foreword by one who never knew Yoder personally.

## Jacob Good and his Bicycle

(From the diary  
of Abram B. Mensch)

Friday, May 5, 1899.

This afternoon Jacob Good from Ohio came here on his bicycle. Today he came from Coatesville, Pennsylvania. He spent most of the winter and spring in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, weaving carpet which is his trade.

He will spend a week in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and a few days in Philadelphia; then go to Atlantic City, New York City, Albany, Buffalo and Niagara Falls; then strike for home.

Saturday, May 6, 1899.

My parents not home last night so Jacob Good and I went on bicycles to Jacob Moyers and a short time to my Uncle Henry Bowers, both living at Harleysville, Pennsylvania. I left Jacob Good at Moyers and I went home for dinner.

In the evening Jacob Good came to my parents overnight.

Sunday, May 7, 1899.

We were in Sunday school and church at home [Skipack]. Father had text: St. Matt. Chp. 18, v. 11.

Jacob Good went along to Sunday school and church. He enjoyed both.

Jacob Good and I left church at once at the close and went home, and I got him dinner. Then he left on his bicycle for Souderton where there was communion.

Tuesday, May 16, 1899.

Today I went with Sheridan Metz to Norristown. We stopped in at George Kreibles on account of the showers, then on to Philadelphia where I spent the day touring the city with Jacob B. Good from Ohio.

Jacob Good [while on his bicycle] collided with a team and bruised himself, and his bicycle was demolished so badly that at the repair shop they offered only \$2.00 for it.

He had his bruises dressed at a drugstore for a half dollar. Then we went from place to place in the P.M.

*The above account was submitted by Wilmer Reinford, who makes the following comment:*

I would like to have the following questions answered about this interesting person:

1. Who was Jacob Good?
2. Was he a son of or any relation to Isaac and Fannie Good, River Styx, Medina County, Ohio, who are also listed in the Jacob B. Mensch letter collection?
3. As he was a weaver of carpets and spending time in Lancaster and Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and undoubtedly working at this trade in his home community, is there any of his carpet around or in use at the present time?

*Any information to the above inquiries please forward to Wilmer Reinford, Box 32, Creamery, Pennsylvania 19430.*

## Recent Publications

Epp, Elsie Riekman. *Heinrich Wieler, 1865-1977*. Pp. 127. \$5.00.

Ewert, Heinrich. *Stammbaum und Chronik der Ewert-Familie*. Munich, 1984. Pp. 51. \$9.00.

Flitcraft, Betty Stover, Compiler. *Stover Family History*. Elkhart, Indiana, 1984. Order from compiler, 1262 Columbian Ave., Elkhart, IN 46514.

Hallman, Joan Bechtel, et al. *Family History of Peter Shirk*. 1984. Pp. 80.

Hiebert, Albert H. and John H. Toevs, Compilers. *The Family of Johann Hiebert, 1816-1975*. Hillsboro, Kansas. Pp. 121. Order from John H. Toevs, 115 S. Ash, Hillsboro, KS 67063.

Hoover, Peter, Compiler. *A Record of the Ancestors and Descendants of David B. Martin 1838-1920 Supplement: John C. Weber Family, The Hoover Family*. Wallenstein, Ontario. Pp. 119. \$31.00.

Horning, Moses M. *A Record of the Decendants of the Moses Musser Horning and Lavina Gehman Horning Family*. 1967. Pp. 125. \$26.00.

Kennel, Lillian. *History of the Wilmot Amish Mennonite Congregation*. Baden, Ontario, 1984. Order from Steinman Mennonite Church, Baden, Ontario N0B 1G0.

Kipfer, Alfred and Lorraine Roth, Compilers. *John S. Kipfer Ancestors and Descendants*. Kitchener, Ontario, 1983.

Lebold, Frances et al. *Maple View Mennonite Church*. Wellesley, Ontario, 1984. Available from Maple View Mennonite Church, R.R. 2, Wellesley, Ontario N0B 2T0.

Lichty, Marian E., Compiler. *Martin M. Sauder Family History, 1766-1972*. Pp. 77. \$26.00.

Martin, Louise A. *Family Record of Isaac Martin*. Nappanee, Indiana. Pp. 49. \$21.00.

Miller, Betty A. and Oscar R. Bixel. *Family History: Descendants of Abraham Bixel and Magdalena Schumacher, 1843-1984*. Berlin, Ohio, 1984. Pp. 94. \$7.50. Order from authors, Box 229, Berlin, OH 44610.

Redekop, Freda Pellman. *The Redekop(p) Book: the Descendants of Benjamin Redekopp (1833-1907) and Anna (Wiebe nee Berg) Redekopp (1819-1899)*. Waterloo, Ontario, 1984. Pp. 323. \$30.00.



Schlabach, Christian J. and Elizabeth S., Compilers. *Family Record of Jacob J. Gingerich and Elizabeth D. Gingerich and their Descendants, 1845-1982*. Kalona, Iowa, 1982. pp. 181. \$7.50.

Out of a life-long interest in the Mennonite Church and its history, he devoted a generous portion of his time and personal resources to the recording of this story of the Mennonites in Arizona.

*The Mennonites in Arizona* may be ordered from Dr. Henry D. Esch, 8112 N. 7th St., Phoenix, Arizona 85020.

—David Mann

## Book Reviews

*The Mennonites in Arizona*. Edited by Dr. Henry D. Esch. Pp. 200. \$9.95, plus \$2.00 for postage and handling. Paperback only.

*The Mennonites in Arizona*, a 200-page history of the development of the church and witness of the Mennonites in Arizona came off the press in July. This book, edited by Dr. Henry D. Esch, D.C., includes the story of the Mennonites in Arizona from the General Conference Mennonite Mission to the Hopi Indians in 1893, and an early Amish settlement in Glendale in 1908 to the opening of a Chinese (Taiwanese) Mennonite Church in May 1985.

The stories of the churches are enriched by personal stories of families who came to Arizona for a variety of reasons and participated in the founding of the congregations. In addition to these accounts of the churches, the book reports the histories of Voluntary Service and Mennonite Disaster Service in Arizona, the Discipleship Program, the Glencroft Retirement Center and Glenhaven, a ministry to retarded persons and their families.

Fifteen pictures give a visual glimpse of the present churches. A 19-page index gives the names of all the Voluntary Service persons who served in Arizona under the Mennonite Board of Missions. The book concludes with a bibliography of recommended readings on Mennonite Roots and Vision.

Dr. Henry D. Esch, D.C., came to Arizona with his family in 1947. He was an enthusiastic pioneer and supporter in the early days of the Sunnyslope, Buckeye, and Prescott Mennonite Churches. He was also one of the visionaries and promoters of the Glencroft Retirement Center.

*The Life and thought of Michael Sattler*.

By C. Arnold Snyder. Herald Press: Scottdale, Pennsylvania; Kitchener, Ontario, 1984. Pp. 260. \$19.95, in Canada \$25.95.

To read this book is to plunge into deep and heavy waters. It is as the title suggests both a biography and a study in Anabaptist origins, or more particularly, the roots of Sattler's thought. It is a stimulating exploration into the evidences of Roman Catholic and monastic contribution to Swiss and South German Anabaptism. One is tempted to conclude that there is a more critical kinship between Anabaptism and certain aspects of Catholicism than there is between Anabaptism and Protestantism. Certainly the old theory that Anabaptism is a Protestant version of monasticism is weakened, if not discarded, by this study. Snyder dares to challenge some of the findings and judgments of other past and contemporary esteemed Anabaptist-Mennonite scholars.

What may challenge many readers' credulity is the author's thesis that "underlying the entire monastic movement was a strong emphasis on scripture, more particularly the New Testament, as the only norm for the truly Christian life. Thus from the start monasticism hearkened back to a biblically-based life of costly and serious discipleship in the face of growing nominal Christian profession . . ." but this may only betray the superficiality of our understanding of monasticism. Snyder also cogently develops the thesis that Sattler's Christocentrism was a major contribution to the emerging Anabaptism of Schleithem while the thought and message of Grebel, Mantz, and Blaurock emphasized rather the "commands of Scripture."

He concludes: "The particular point of focus that Michael Sattler contributed to the Anabaptist movement was Christ himself."

Snyder devotes five chapters to Sattler's life and another five to his thought, analyzing especially his views on Scripture, Christology, Doctrine of Salvation, and his view of the Church. There are nearly forty pages of footnotes and twelve pages of bibliography plus an index of Concepts and another of Names and Places. These indices, like most, are not as comprehensive as this reviewer would like, omitting for example, any entry for Psychopannychism though he speaks of it on page 130.

Sattler's borrowings from or similarities to the Benedictine Rule in his exposition of his Anabaptist thought is all the more intriguing in the light of his divergence from the monastic vision. And the subtleties of his thought which are for us so crucial to a full-orbed Christian faith are all the more surprising in light of the fact that he was immersed enough in Benedictine theology to have likely served as prior of St. Peter's Monastery and this in spite of the fact that he had almost certainly no university training. The data surrounding the events of Sattler's life at St. Peter's led him to abandon all hope of reforming the established church so that Snyder concludes his book with this statement: "We can safely say that the wide acceptance of sectarianism among Swiss Anabaptists began at Schleithem, following the defeat of the peasants. But the sectarian theology of Schleithem leads from Michael Sattler straight back to the monastery."

It is even noted that the program of moral, social and economic reform expressed concretely by the Black Forest peasants was entitled "Brotherly Union" so that it was surely not accidental that the articles of Schleithem were given the same title! But it is also worth noting that Sattler added that what he was now describing was the *true* brotherly union in contrast to the misguided manifesto of the peasants who were misled concerning violence and social revolt. What Roman Catholicism had marginalized as an acceptable alternative for the few countenancing monasticism was brought vigorously into the Christian mainstream in Anabaptism and declared confidently to be the full counsel of God for all



mankind who will hear and freely enter into it.

Snyder notes but leaves unaddressed the question as to what way, and to what extent, the distinctive theological synthesis of Schleithem influenced subsequent developments within Anabaptism. But it becomes very clear that Sattler must be added as the fourth person to the erstwhile triumvirate of Grebel, Mantz and Blaurock in Swiss Anabaptism! Snyder has plowed much new ground here that will have to be taken into account as the origins of Anabaptism continue to be sought and understood.

—Gerald C. Studer

*Anabaptist Portraits.* By John Allen Moore. Herald Press: Scottdale, Pennsylvania; Kitchener, Ontario, 1984. Pp. 260. \$9.95, in Canada \$12.95. Paperback only.

This book represents one of the happiest marriages of theology and history that I have encountered for a good while. These biographies bring the persons to life with a vitality that most other church history-related writing has not achieved for me. I am amazed at the fascinating detail that this author has incorporated into the accounts of these six early Anabaptist leaders, namely, Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, George Blaurock, Michael Sattler, Hans Denck, and Balthasar Hubmaier. It is a real gift of the author to be able to make otherwise heavy historical material so palatable to a reader of today.

This is the first book written by this author that has been published by Herald Press. Dr. Moore was for many years a teacher of church history and other subjects at the international Baptist Theological Seminary in Switzerland. He has walked in the footsteps of the Brethren pioneers in many countries of Europe seeking to visualize and understand their ministry. This book is a prime exhibit of the fruit of this endeavor during the 40 years of his service in Europe.

The old adage says that "all princes limp" and this becomes evident in respect to these leaders. But their failings make them all the more credible and provide grist for the reader's own reflection concerning the depth and earnestness of his con-

victions. There was a time when even our esteemed leader Michael Sattler was willing with other Anabaptist leaders to agree to renounce Anabaptism, pay court costs, and permanently leave Zurich territory in order to be released from prison. Hubmaier also smudged his record when he, early in his life, promised to respect the privileges guaranteed by the Emperor to the Jews but then resumed his anti-Jewish activities upon his return to Regensburg.

The Anabaptist-Mennonite conviction regarding the non-taking of oaths obviously had a checkered beginning for here one learns that Felix Mantz won release from prison upon taking an oath that he would no longer disturb the peace or persist in baptizing or inciting to adult baptism. Here also we learn that the strong part played by Anabaptist women eventually earned for them the same harsh treatment as that dealt to the men.

A refrain found repeatedly throughout the early days of Anabaptism is the accusation by the authorities that the Anabaptists practiced and advocated Christian communism which, while it was never actually true of any Anabaptists except those whom we know as Hutterites, yet they did exemplify such a compassion for their fellow-believers that this accusation was a credit to their spirit and manner of life. Would to God that we who claim this heritage today would be so accused, even if falsely!

Hubmaier here receives much more extensive treatment than do the other five leaders. Perhaps this shows the bias of a Baptist author since Baptists have long been more comfortable with Hubmaier as a spokesman for them than Mennonites have. Yet we are deeply indebted to Hubmaier and his writings also, especially those that treat baptism, the Lord's Supper, discipline and free will. Mennonite traditions could well reflect the same great respect for these works of Hubmaier that those of the Hutterites do.

In these lives and times we see the same vigorous difference of opinion among the early Anabaptists that we experience today with respect to the nonpayment of military taxes, and the place of women in ministry. Hans Denck is here given a sympathetic treatment even though his views were sometimes suspect, as for example,

whether or not he was a universalist. Again, Hubmaier held to the perpetual virginity of Mary, a belief which neither Baptists nor Mennonites hold today. Hubmaier also reinterpreted fasting to mean avoiding excess consumption of food and drink—a position which merits our practice as much as ever though this is not the usual meaning of fasting. I for one tend to heartily agree with Hubmaier that "where [brotherly discipline] is not practiced, there is certainly no church, even if water baptism and the Lord's supper are observed." Hubmaier is not above a humorous play on words even while strenuously defending what was for some an offensive belief, as when he writes against infant baptism and says: "For what on this earth can be more infantile than to take a baby two hours old and ask the child in Latin if it renounces the devil? The child is supposed to answer in German . . . as if the infant had studied two languages in its mother's womb. O what childishness!"

I was intrigued to discover throughout these portraits that these leaders used the same arguments and reasonings that I use today in explaining and defending the Anabaptist understandings of the Scriptures. For example, on the progressiveness of revelation, Hans Denck pointed out that God commanded his people to keep circumcision forever and yet in the New Testament it was displaced; or in addressing predestination as an arbitrary and exclusive act of God, he admits divine foreknowledge but notes that this does not make God responsible for it; or in pointing out the danger of making an idol of scripture by honoring it yet showing a coldness in the love of God; or finally, in commenting that oath taking is forbidden to Christians because "oaths and vows are not within human power to keep."

*Anabaptist Portraits* is simply a remarkably readable and useful book in coming to a deeper appreciation of this rich Anabaptist tradition and its development out of a simple obedience to Christ and the Scriptures. I cannot recommend it too highly to church libraries and to all individuals who have entered the Christian life with the purpose of deepening it as long as they live and follow Jesus within a fellowship of believers.

—Gerald C. Studer